

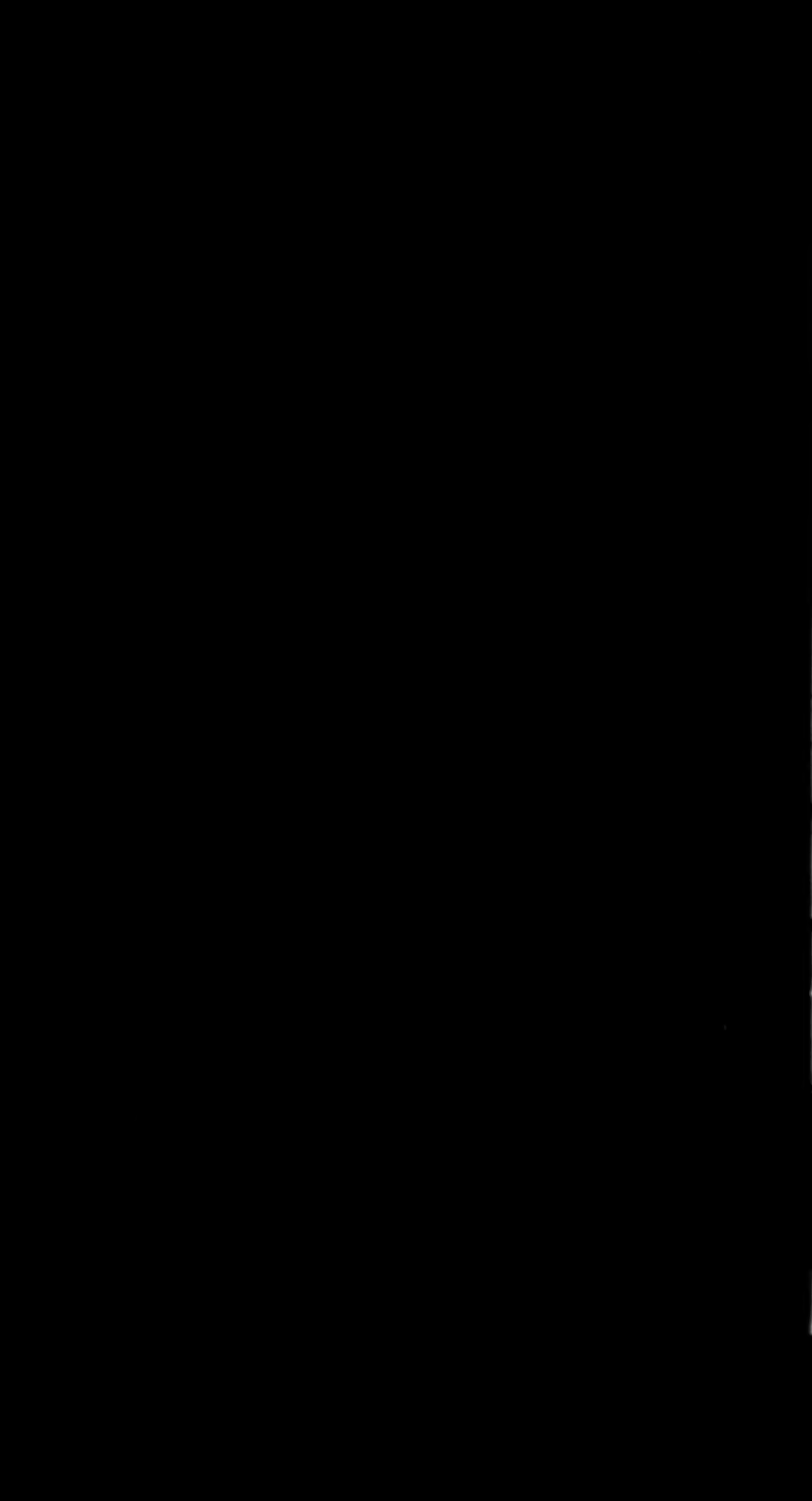
Margaret Spier

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
THE SAINTS
Infirmities.

Delivered in severall Ser-
mons by JOHN PRESTON
Doctor in Divinity, Mr. of
Emmanuel Colledge in
Cambridge.

And late preacher of Lincolnes-Inne.

LONDON,
Printed by *Nich. and Iohn Okes*
for *Henry Taunton*, and are to be
sold at his shop in *St. Dunstons*
Church-yard in Fleet-
street. 1637.



787

Amos 2. Cap: 11. V. 4.

Nath: Cap: 2. V. 6.



THE
Doctrine of the
SAINTS Infirmities
Deliverd in Sundry
SERMONS.

By Iohn Preston,
Dr. in D. M. of Emmanuel
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Will: Marshall.





TO
THE LEAR-
NED and Religi-
ous Gentleman HEN-
RY LAURENCE
Esquire.

 Or by Sir, al-
though your
own native worth
might justly draw
from us a greater
A 3 testi-

The Epistle

testimony of ob-
servance, than the
putting of this lit-
tle *Treatise* into
your hand ; yet
have wee beene ra-
ther hereunto in-
duced, by the con-
sideration of such
adornments of *wis-
dome, learning, & pie-
ty* in you, as had ex-
presse relation to
the author, & may
seeme

Dedictory.

seem to be the fruit
& issues of his labours
in your younger years. It is true
indeed that the goodnes
of the soile ads much un-
to the greatnesse of
the crop; but it is as
true, that the in-
dustry and wise-
dome of the hus-
bandman ads also
much unto the

A 4 good-

The Epistle

goodnesse of the
soile ; yet neither
of these without a
gracious influence
from heaven bring
forth a harvest.

It hath pleased
God, there should
be extant divers
monuments, wher-
by the Authors e-
minent abilities
doe yet survive in
the hearts , and
esteeme

Dedictory.

esteeme of men;
yet none expresse
him more unto the
life, than the piety
& vertue of those
that grew up un-
der him; *he lives* 1 Theſ. 3. 8.
if they stand fast in
the Lord. Among
whom, as you had
a greater intimacy
of all the nearest,
not of a pupill, but
of a *bosom-friend*, &
con-

The Epistle

continually companions, and therein a longer time : so have you answered it, as then in love and respect to him, so since in a proportionable & happy improvement of what you did receive. And therefore as we conceived, it would be a derogation in-

Dedictory.

injurious to your
candid and ingeni-
ous disposition, to
thinke you unwill-
ing to bee put in
minde of him, by
whose religious
care you were so
often put in mind
of God, & of your
selfe : so also an
unworthy and un-
grateful disrespect,
to have omitted
the

The Epistle, &c.

the inscription of
your name; especi-
ally by us, who
long have beene,
and are,

Your loving and obliged
Friends,

The. Goodwin.

The. Ball.



SERMONS

BY

JOHN PRESTON

Dr. of D.

2. Chron. 30. 18, 19, 20.

18 **E** Or a Multitude
of the people e-
ven many of E-
phraim, and Manasseh,
Issachar, and Zebulon,
had not cleansed them-
selves; yet did they eat
the Passeeover, otherwise
then it was written, but
Hezekiah prayed for the
saying, the good Lord
pardon every one.

B 19. That

19. *That prepareth his heart to seeke God : The Lord God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.*
20. *And the Lord hearkned to Hezekiah, and healed the people.*

UPon the occasion of these words was the illegality of some resorters to the Passeover at this *Time*, for this solemne Duty having beene long neglected, by occasion of the negligence of former Governors: *Ezekiah* sends his Messengers not onely
into

into *Juda*, but also into *Israel*, to assemble them, if it were possible, unto this great Solemnity, which was effected with various successe, for in some places they were entertain'd with scoffs; in others, with great readinesse, to submit themselves unto this Sacred ordinance, but the warning being short, and journey long, there were many wanted legal cleansing; *Hezekiah* seeing the promptnesse of the people, and that in the substance of the Duty they had not fayled, puts up this Prayer to Almighty God, in their behalfe.

In which prayer we have these three things to be

considered, and understood.

1 The substance of it, which was, that GOD would pardon, or be mercifull.

2 The persons for whom he made it, and they are described two wayes.

1 From the preparation of their Soules and inward man, they prepared their whole hearts.

2 From the imperfections of their outward and legall preparations, they were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

3 The successe and issue that it had, which was the healing of the people, that is, God blessed that ordinance

nance of his for the removall of that outward guilt, contracted by those ceremoniali neglects, or otherwise, and for the strengthening of their Soules in grace and holinesse, and for the curing of their outward estate, which lay open at this time to many pressures and calamities on every side. The points of Doctrine might be many that would hence arise, but we doe purpose onely to handle two.

I That in all the parts *Doct. 1.*
of publicke worship and performances, the Lord especially requires, and expects the Heart bee right; he would have nothing wanting, but of all

the rest hee would not have the heart imperfect, or defective, the good Lord, (sayes this good King) be mercifull to every one that prepareth his whole heart, to seeke the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not clensed, that is, though hee be in other things imperfect and defective : So *Solomon*, this good Kings predecessor, *Prov. 4. 23. Keepe thy heart with all diligence, thy foot is not to be neglected, Eccle. 5. 1.* but to be kept, but not with so much care and circumspection as the heart, that part must not be wanting, what-ever other parts were; and therefore if a-
ny

ny were in this defective
Hezekiah prayes not for
them.

1. Because the heart is
that which God himselfe
doth most delight in, no
duty can be well perfor-
med where God himselfe
doth not vouchsafe his
presence and assistance.

Reas. 1.

*Heb. 13. 15. By him there-
fore let us offer the Sacrifice
of praise to God continually,
that is, by his assistance and
gracious presence, but
where there is not a heart
to receive and entertaine
God in, he never will, nor
doth afford his presence.*

*Esay 66. 1, 2. Heaven is
my throne, and the earth my
footstoole, &c. But to this
man will I looke, even to*

B 4 him

him that is poore, and of a contrite heart, according to that of the Psal. 51. 17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and contrite heart, &c.*

Though to the eye of men it may seeme a despicable and meane abode, for such a glorious and excellling Majesty, yet sure it is not so by him accounted : when a great man is to bee received into our houses, we are careful that there be no breaches in them ; but when the great and glorious God is to be received into our hearts, he will not stumble at the wounds and breaches.

Reason 2.

The heart is that onely
part,

part, whereby God estimates, and makes a judgement of the whole, hee takes measure of a man by his heart, if that bee sound and upright, hee never curiously examines other parts; we commonly are taken with the face and countenance, because we are not able to looke deeper; but God regards not that, as being able to descend into the secret closet of the heart. 1. Sam. 16. 6. 7. And hee looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lords annointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Looke not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the

*Lord seeth not as man seeth;
For man looketh on the out-
ward appearance ; but the
Lord seeth the heart : And
accordingly yee have the
doome of almost all the
Kings of Iudah, according
to the goodnesse or bad-
nesse of their hearts : 2.
Chron. 25. 2. Hee did that
which was right in the sight
of God, but not with a per-
fect heart : And the like
is also testified of many
other of them.*

Reason-3

3. The heart is the har-
dest piece to manage and
manure; and therefore he
that keepes that well in
tune, is not likely to bee
wanting in the other : if in
a Violl, I finde the Treble
string in tune ; I make no
que-

question of the Base that goes not out so easily : *Simon Magnus* had composed the other parts, *Acts* 8. 13. *He did beleewe, and was Baptized :* but this string was out of tune, the Apostle findes this jarring, *ver.* 21. *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this businesse, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God,* in his owne sight no question but hee thought it so, but it was not so in Gods sight : And indeed the heart is so deceitfull, that it will deceive the the very owner and possessor of it : like to your Juglers, that will doe a thing before your face, and yet you sha'l not see them do it, *2. King.* *Why weepeth my*

my Lord? (saith Hazael) Why (saies the Prophet) for the great evill, that I know thou wilt doe unto the Children of Israel; their strong holds thou wilt set on fire, &c. And Hazael said, Is thy servant a dogge, that hee should doe this great things?

There were Characters of cruelty ingraven on his heart, which himselfe had never read, nor beene acquainted yet withall, *Who knoweth (saith the Apostle) 1. Cor. 2. 11. the things of a man, but the spirit of man that is within him?* One would think a man should read his owne hand, yet some do write so bad, that they cannot read it when they have done; and so did
Hazael,

Hazael, he had hatcht such cursed thoughts within him, that hee could not see unto the utmost *terminus* and end of them ; if a man hath a spot upon his face, hee is warned of it by every body else, because its knowne hee cannot see it; but he may have a thousand spots upon his heart, and neither he, nor no man in the world beside be able to discover it: he therefore, that hath well prepared this part, will hardly be defective in the rest.

4. The heart is the spring and first wheele of all that curious Clocke-worke of the soule; so that if that bee but ordered and kept aright

Reason 4.

aright, it will direct and order all the rest, and this is the reason that the Holy Ghost is pleased for to give, *Prov. 4. 23. Out of it are the issues of life* : If a man had a Wel or Fountaine in his garden ; out of which came all the liquors that he used, he had neede be very diligent to keepe that cleane ; if that were poisoned, it would be hard for himselfe long to escape. Now the heart is such a fountaine, *Rom. 10. 10. With the heart man believeth to righteousness, And from within, even out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, &c. Mar. 7. 21. the Gentiles were accounted common & prophane before Christs time* ;

time, but after their hearts |
were purified, even *Peter* |
himselfe, the *Apostle* of the |
Circumcision, durst venture |
on them, *Act. 15. 9. For God* |
put no difference betweene |
them & the Jewes, after that |
by faith hee had purified |
their hearts: give me never |
so bad a man, make but his |
heart right, and I dare ven- |
ture to close with him, |
if ye take out the Serpents |
sting, hee may bee played |
with, or otherwise imploi- |
ed, without either danger, |
or other inconvenience.

Let us every one be hence *vse.*
encouraged to examine
well, and looke unto our
hearts; for if they be any
way disordered and out of
tune, our actions and per-
for.

formances will not be relished. Remember what the Apostle saith, *Heb. 3. 12.* *Take heede brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbeliefe, to depart from the living God; an unbeleeving and evill heart will evermore bee drawing backe from God, will not come at him by its good will, Mat. 15. 8, 9.* *They honour mee with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from mee.* And what then became of all their worship? why surely it came to nothing, *In vaine they worship mee:* A heartlesse worship is a worship that God regards not; but if the heart bee framed and prepared as it should

should be, God lookes not at the many imperfections that may be found in circumstantiall matters.

But it will bee here demanded, how one may know when his heart is truly qualified and fitted for a duty?

Question.

When hee is perswaded of a speciall, and peculiar eye of God upon him in the duty, that God in a speciall manner doth behold him, and observe him how hee doth it; hee must beleieve that God is at his Elbow, *Heb. 11. 6.* *Hee that commeth to God, must beleieve that God is; that is, must have his heart delivered from that blindness, wherein by nature all mens hearts*

Answer. I.

hearts remaine. What was the reason that the Gentiles, even in their solemn worship of their Gods, were so abominable oftentimes? because their hearts were darke and blinde in spirituall and celestiaall matters, *Rom. 1. 21. 22, 23. Their foolish hearts were darkened, and then they changed the truth of God into a lye, and worshipped the Creature in stead of the Creator, &c.* But when the heart is seriously convinced that God is present, records and registers all our deportments whatsoever: it makes us circumspect and careful, even those that are otherwise regardlesse of their duties; yet

yet when their Masters eie is on them, will consider what they doe : and therefore the Apostle requires of Christian Servants more, *Ephes. 6. 6.* Because the heathen would doe thus much, the very Assc, when shee saw the Angel in the passage, behaves her selfe accordingly, *Numb. 22. 23.* If a man would therefore know, whether his heart be fitted and prepared for any duty, let him seriously examine, whether hee is thus perswaded of the speciall eye of God upon him in it.

2. The heart is then prepared for a duty and service unto God, when it is sequestred and taken off from

from other things : when the drosse and staine of natural selfe-love, and earthly mindednesse is gotten out : as we see, men bring not filthy vessels, unwashed, and uncleansed to their Masters Table. Yee may see, perhaps, an impure and filthy vessell in the Kitchin, but upon the Table it is not tollerable : These men that came unto the Passeover, although not washed according to the purification of the Sanctuary ; yet were, no question, purged inwardly : they had, no doubt, a substantiall, though not a Ceremoniall cleansing, according to that of the Apostle, *2 Tim. 2. 21. If a*
man

*man doe therefore purge
himselſe from theſe, he ſhall
be a veſſell unto honour. ſan-
ctified, and meete for the
Maſters uſe, and prepared
unto every good worke.*

There's none of us would
have our meate come up
upon a dirty Diſh, and
much leſſe God. When
David asked for ſome ho-
ly Shew-bread from the
Priests, he tells him with-
all, that the veſſels of the
young men, that were to
carry it, were holy, *1 Sam.*
21.5. So muſt our hearts
be, when we adventure to
draw neare to God : And
though we cannot here at-
taine a perfect purity, but
that corruption will ſtill be
mingled with our beſt per-
forman.

formances, yet that must be removed, and laid aside, that kept us back from turning to the Lord: the rubbish of necessity must be removed, that stops the building from going on, 1 Pet. 1. 22, 23. *Seeing yee have purified your soules to the obedience of the truth, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, &c. Being borne againe, &c.* That is, seeing that original impurity, that blocked up the soule from turning unto God, is done away, the heapes of muck and rubbish, that stood where now the building is erected; for that's done alwaies at the first conversion of the soule to God, and never fully doth returne. 3. When

3. When it is softned,
and fitted to receive im-
pressions : when the *Cen-
surion* by much dejection
and prostration of his soule
to God in secret, had his
heart so mollified, that any
thing would make a char-
acter or Print : Hce tells
*Peter, He was ready to heare
whatsoever God should bee
pleased for to speake, Act. 10*
33. It's not enough that
the mettall be refined, and
purged from the drosse,
that before did cleave unto
it : unlesse it likewise be so
softned, as that it will ac-
commodate it selfe unto
the mold, or stampe it shal
be cast into : and therefore
it's powred into that while
it is soft and liquid. So the
Apostle

Apostle *Rom. 6. 17.* argues, they now were truly freed from the dominion and power of their former unregenerate estate, because their Hearts did yeeld unto the stampe that was imprinted on them,

Ἐπεὶ ὁ παρὰ φύσιν τύπον ἔλαβον.

As the mettall then is judged to bee sufficiently continued in the Furnace, when it willingly receives the forme and figure of that which it is cast and powred into.

Thus *Paul* was melted by that Sunne of Righteousnesse, that shone into his soule when he was going upon other errands, *Acts 9. 6.* And he trembling and astonished, saying, Lord, what wilt

wilt thou have mee for to doe? as if he should have said, This fire of thy love hath now so thawed and melted my obdurate, and kicking soule, that it is prepared for any mould, to receive what print soever thou shalt bee pleased for to stamp upon it: put mee into whatsoever shape thou wilt, I am now ready for any mold; to be a preacher, that have been a persecutor; to suffer my selfe, that have beene the cause of so much suffering to others formerly; and therefore no marvaile, if the Lord professeth he would looke to such alone, *Isaiah 66. 2.* because onely such are fitted to bee

C wrought

wrought upon ; whereas unbroken and unmollified spirits submit to nothing, but the Word is as water spilt upon the Rocke, that makes no manner of impression.

4. The heart is then prepared for a duty, when it makes the duty but a bridge to lead him unto God, when it rests not in the deed, but passeth by it, and through it to God : Yee have many very frequent in the outward acts of duty, will heare, and pray, and fast, and preach perhaps ; yet raise their soules no higher than the outward act alone. *Hos. 7.*

14. *And they have not cryed unto mee with their hearts,*

hearts, when they howled up-
on their beds : Therefore
not with their hearts, be-
cause not unto me, or at
least, with hearts well qua-
lified, and fitted for that
holy duty : There were
some (it may bee) a-
mong these people that
came unto the Passeeover
to please the King, because
the King was pleased for
to have it so, and so they
should, but if they rested
there, and went no further,
their service would not
be accepted, neither were
they included in *Hezeki-
ahs* Prayer; for hee onely
prayed for them that
sought the Lord God of
their Fathers; not that
sought the face of the Ru-

ler, or the favour of this godly King, or any other bie and carnall end. So *Esa. 55. 6. Seeke the Lord while he may be found.* The duty is ordayned to draw and to allure the soule to God, no more but an opportunity that God and men may trade, and have commerce with one another: As *Solomon* did therefore build the glorious Temple to the Lord, that he might dwell with men: *2. Chron. 7. 12.* But now if any rested in that Temple, and went no higher, he had no interest in any promise that was made unto it, for the condition of the promise was, that they should seeke his face.

face. ver. 14. If my people
which are called by my
name, shall humble them-
selves, and pray, and seeke
my face, and turne from
their wicked way: Then
will I heare from Heaven,
& wil forgive their sin, and
wil heale their Land: if they
shall humble themselves,
and pray, and seeke my face;
but if they prayed never
so much, and in their pray-
ers had onely respect and
aime unto themselves, hee
would not heare them:
It is a strange expression
of the Prophet, *Amos* 5.
25. 26. Have yee offered un-
to me Sacrifice, and offe-
rings in the wildernesse,
by the space of forty yeeres
O ye house of Israel? Why

what did they with the
Tabernacle, and all their
furniture : but accommo-
date their publicke service
in the wildernesse; no saies
God, Yee did it to your
selves; your ends and
aimes were carnall, sensu-
all, and earthly in it, and
you had no profit by it, as
neither have many now a
dayes; for want of dispo-
sing and preparing of their
hearts for God aright.
And so wee have done
with the first poynt obser-
ved from the Text.

Wee are now to come
unto the latter part, and
reason of this holy mans
request, which was their
not being cleansed accor-
ding to the purification of
the

the Sanctuary, which was a legal barre & lett to stop them from the Passeeover, how upright and sincere soever they were: Wherefore he labours by earnest prayer to remove this barre and great impediment, and the Lord expresseth here his willingnes to be intreated; for the Lord heard his prayer, and healed the people, whence this will follow.

Where there is uprightness and sincerity of heart, Infirmities do not exclude from mercy; this is apparant in the Text, for hee prayes for mercy, and hath it granted, although they were not qualified as God required, and may

Doct. 2.

bee further proved.

Reason I.

From the wisdom of God, who knowes what we can doe, and will expect no more; as a wise parent will not looke for so much from a weake childe, as from a strong; nor from a sicke servant, as from a healthfull; it is his wisdom to consider what we are, and accordingly to deale with us; and therefore we may bee sure that he will not cast us off for our infirmities, but as a Father beares with his Sonne that feares him, though hee spyces many faults in him: *Like as a Father pittiyeth his children, so the Lord pittiyeth them that feare him. For hee know-*

knoweth our frame, he remembreth that wee are but dust. Psal. 103. 13, 14. So the Lord bath compassion on them that feare him: Why? because he knows whereof we are made, he remembreth that we are but dust: So we see, that when the Israelites had so provoked God, that he could scarce hold his hand off them; yet he staied his hand, even then when he was ready to strike. And many times saith the Text, Psal. 78. 38, 39. But he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stirre up his wrath; For he remembered that they

were but flesh, and that they were even a winde that passeth away, and commeth not againe. He called backe his anger, because hee remembered they were but flesh. And herein God shewes his wisdome, and wee ours : A wise man looks for no more of his servant than he is able to doe : but on the contrary, a foolish man expects as much from a weaker, as from a stronger, and fals presently upon him if hee does not as much : So we our selves shew our wisdome in other things, as for example.

If there were a little Gold, and much drosse mingled together ; A wise man

man will not for the drosse sake cast away the gold, but purifie and trye it : So if we have corne, although there be some cockle in it, yet a wise husband-man will not reject it, but winnow it, and purge it.

So God being a wise God, doth not cast us off presently for our infirmities, if there bee any truth and sincerity in us : And as God is wise, so compassionate, and beares with our infirmities.

The *Taske-masters* wanted compassion, and therefore expected more from the *Israelites* than they were able to do : So whilst we were under the Law, there was a burthen laid upon

upon us, which neither we nor our fathers could beare ; but now if wee bee once under grace, the Lord doth not lay such loads upon us : But if there bee truth in the heart, he accepts of our endeavours, although accompanied with many weaknesses.

Reason 2.

A second reason is taken from the covenant, for so long as a man is in the covenant, his infirmities cannot cut him off from Gods mercy. Now it is certaine, wee may have many infirmities, and the covenant remaine unbroken : for every sin doth not breake the covenant, but those that untie the
mar-

marriage knot : As in marriage every offence doth not disanull the marriage, but onely the breach of the marriage vow : to wit, adultery : So onely here those finnes that breake the covenant, which untie the marriage knot, (as it were) and that is ;

First, when wee take any new master, and this wee doe when wee let any sinne reigne in our hearts ; if we set up any sinne that commands and rules us ; then the covenant is broken, for thou hast chosen a new Master.

Secondly, if we take another husband ; and this wee doe

doe, when wee make a league with sinne; if wee be in league with any thing in the world, that doth draw our hearts from God, wee breake our covenant in choosing another husband. But other failings doe not breake the covenant, and whiles it remaines in force, we have interest in Gods mercies, for hee cannot forget his covenant; which if hee should, yet Christ is the Mediator, and would put him in minde of it.

Reason. 3.

A third reason is drawne from the common condition of all the Saints: Take all the Saints that ever lived, and every one of them have had in.
firmi-

firmities. Now if God should be too extreame to marke our iniquities, (*Psal. 130. 3 & 4.*) who should stand ? If God should cast off all that have infirmities, then none should be saved, and then wherefore hath Christ dyed ? But saith the Psalmist : *Mercy is with thee, therefore thou art to be feared* : That is, if God were so severe a master, that he would endure no failing, then he should have no servants : But it is his mercy that makes him to be feared. And thus wee see, that infirmities doe not cut us off from Gods mercy, if we be sound at the heart, but withall wee must remember these two cautions.

First,

Caution 1. *✱* First, though infirmities do not utterly exclude us from the mercies of God; yet they may bring upon us many and sore afflictions, and hinder us of many blessings: & here we must remeber these distinctions.

1.

First, there is a voluntary infirmity, which proceeds from our owne wils, & by how much the more will is in an infirmity, by so much the more God is provoked to anger, and to punish and afflict us.

But there is another infirmity which ariseth from some impediment which a man would faine remove, but he cannot. As for example: A man would faine remember all hee heareth,

reth, but he cannot, because his memory is fraile, and he cannot help it; he would convert many to God, but he cannot, because he hath weak parts. He would faine have such a lust removed, but God doth not please to set his Spirit at liberty, though he do his uttermost endeavour, for that must still be remembred; for if a man saies hee would pray fervently morning & evening, & yet sits still, & doth not set upon the duty and strive to doe it; this is the act of the sluggard: So also in other things.

Secondly, there is an infirmity that ariseth from want of growth, for there are some Babes in Christ,
some

some buds that are but tender, even as a tree hath some buds and sprouts as well as branches: And these suck sappe from the tree, as well as the branches. Now, God beares much with those that are such, and will not presently punish them for their failings; hee will not in this case quench the smoaking Flaxe, nor breake the bruised Reede: hee will not put new wine into old vessels: he knowest there is much of the old man still in them, and therefore wil not enioyne them to such great duties as they are not able to performe; he will not put too much on them at the first: He
com-

comands us not to reject,
or despise those that are
weake, *Rom. 14. 13.* Let us
not therefore judge one ano-
ther any more, but judge this
rather, that no man put a
stumbling block, or an oc-
casion to fall in his brothers
way. And sure then, him-
selfe will practise that rule
that he prescribes to us.

But now there are other
infirmities that arise from
sicknesse, in those that
have beene strong, and
through some distempers
are become sicke, and are
fallen from their first love,
as in the 2. of the *Rev. 2. 4,*
5. Nevertheless I have
somewhat against thee, be-
cause thou hast left thy first
love: remember therefore
from

from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy first workes, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remoove thy Candlestick out of his place, except thou repent; Or that arise from some desertion, themselves being then causes of it, by reason of presumption; as in *Peter* and *Hezekiah*: Now in this case God doth not beare with a man, but will come against him quickly, and will not stay long, unlesse they repent, and doe their first works.

3. We must remember, that to some, God hath appointed a lesser stature in grace, & to others greater: there are Christians of all sizes, as it were. Now those that
are

are of the least size, they
are the weakest, and these
are generally weake, that
is, they are weake in their
understandings, weake in
affections, weake in all;
& with these God beares
much: As wee may see in
the Church of Thyatira,
*Rev. 2. 24, 25. But unto you
I say, & unto the rest of Thy-
atira, as many as have not
this doctrine, & which have
not knowne the depths of Sa-
than, as they speake: I will
put upon you none other
burthen; but that which
you have already, hold fast
till I come.* There were some
that were expert, and o-
thers that were weaker:
Now for those saith God,
that have not this lear-
ning.

ning, neither have knowne the deepnesse of Satan; I doe not require so much of you, but onely, that you hold fast that which yee have.

4.

Fourthly; but now there is another infirmity, which doth not runne in generall over the whole man, but is some particular infirmity, which is in a man that is strong, and hath attained a greater measure of grace: As a body may be strong, and have some particular weaknesse; and a wall may be strong, yet have some weake parts: so a Christian may have strong Lusts: some particular infirmities; as indulgencies to his Children,

or

or pride, or any other;
so then this rule is true,
That strong infirmities
bring strong afflictions: as
wee see it did in *Ely*, for
his indulgency, and so in
David, he had strong and
long afflictions, for his
strong lusts.

+ Fifthly, we are to remem-
ber, that there is an infir-
mity in a man that hee is
sensible of, and strives a-
gainst it with all his might,
and yet cannot get victory
over it: God may suffer a
man to labour and tugge,
and yet profit nothing by
his paines, but gives him
grace, which is sufficient
for him; hee gives his
pardoning grace, though
not his prevailing grace,

2 Cor. 12. 9. In this case God will beare much, though he cannot get the victory, yet he may get pardon.

6. Sixthly, but there is another infirmity, that befalls us in peace and prosperity, that wee are not sensible of, but are as it were in a sleepe, and forget our selves, and so let some infirmity steale upon us: and in this case, though it will not quite cut us off from Gods mercy, yet it will bring some great affliction upon us, whereby God doth waken us, and bring us unto our selves againe: So hee dealt with *Hezekiah*, no sooner was hee settled in peace and prosperity, but presently he

X
he forgets himselfe, suffers
pride to steal in upon him;
for which wee know how
the Lord awaked him. So
*David, Psal. 30. when hee
was in prosperity thought he
should never bee removed;*
but then God hides his
face, and makes him looke
about him; therefore wee
must remember this cau-
tion:

That though infirmities
doe not cut us off from
Gods mercies; yet if vo-
luntary infirmities in which
our will hath a hand, if
such as are not from weak-
nesse, and want of growth,
but from sicknesse, if
they be some particular
weaknes in a strong Chri-
stian, if they steale upon

D

us

us by our owne sloath, and we are not aware, nor sensible of them ; then they will bring upon us some great crosse and affliction, and hinder us of some great blessings.

Caution 2.

The second Caution is, that yee take heede, that yee doe not mistake those infirmities that proceede from the regenerate part, for those sinnes that proceed frō the unregenerate: for these latter are rebellions, not infirmities; they are wickednesses, not weaknesses; and therefore we must beware, that we do not mistake the one for the other.

To this purpose, it will bee needfull to know
what

what an infirmity is, and this wee may doe by the contrary, if wee consider what strength is.

Now for this wee must know, that there is a two-fold strength.

First; a naturall strength.

1.

Secondly, a supernaturall.

2.

First, a naturall strength is that, by which wee performe the worke of Nature; this in it selfe is neither pleasing, nor displeasing to God; but as a Cypher, when it stands by it selfe is nothing, but a figure being set before it, it encreaseth the summe: so this naturall strength neither pleaseth God, nor displeaseth, but as it is in a

regenerate man, or unregenerate man, so it helps, or hurts.

2.

1.

Secondly, there is a supernaturall strength, by which wee are enabled to doe more than Nature could helpe us to, and this is either for evill, or good things. First, there is a supernaturall strength that tends to evill, when as to the naturall, Sathan addes a supernaturall, to enable men to evill: such a strength have they who dyed for *Turcisme*, and the like; who kill Kings, &c. see how the Apostle lets out this, 2 *Thes.* 2. 9, 10.

Such a strength have they that write, & dispute against

against the truth, they have the strength of mad men, which wee say, are three men strong: So likewise there is a supernaturall weaknes, when to naturall imbecillity there is a superadded weaknesse: in the 8. of *Luke* 12, there we see that the first ground forgot the Word: why? through weaknesse onely? No; but Satan he helps on, *he comes, and takes away the word, &c.* And so we read of a more than naturall unaptnesse to receive the Gospel, *2. Cor. 4. 34. The diuel puts to his hand, hee blinds their eyes, that the light of the Gospel should not shine to them:* He helps forward the naturall weakenesse.

Secondly, there is a supernatural strength to doe good, as *Christ bad his Disciples to stay at Jerusalem, till they were endued with strength from above, Luke 24. 49.* because they were to enter upon a great worke, above naturall strength; to wit, to preach the Gospel, therefore they had neede have strength above nature, because they were to preach the Gospel. This supernaturall strength wee may know by this; it will enable us to doe more than Nature can, it over-flies the reach of nature, or mortality, or common grace: Nature can doe as much as lyes in her power, or as is her worke:

worke : but there are some things which Nature, though never so well refined, can never reach unto. As Iron can doe as much as is in Iron, if it bee made bright, and fit for those severall uses it serves unto : But if you would have this Iron to turne to the North, it cannot doe it, till it bee touched with the Load-stone, and hath a higher quality added to it. So take the purest water, and it can doe what is in the power of water ; it can moisten, coole, descend, or the like : but if you would have water to heate, to ascend, it must be by a supernaturall power, and by a super-

D 4 added

added vertue. And so take nature, and let it be refined with more vertues, and common graces, and it can doe as much as is in nature. But if you would have it love God, or some such higher worke, it cannot doe it; the water riseth no higher than the Spring from whence it came: So naturall men can ascend no higher than nature, and therefore for workes of a higher reach, there must bee strength from above to performe them.

Question.

But what are those things which nature cannot superficially enable a man to doe?

Answer.

Take the best of the
hea.

heathen, or the best natural man, and meere nature cannot enable him to doe these things following.

First, it cannot bring him to this, to preferre *God* before himselfe upon this perswasion, that his well-being doth depend more on *God*, than on himselfe.

1.

Secondly, it cannot enable a man to see sinne, as the greatest evill in the world, and so to hate it, and to looke upon *Christ*, as the greatest good in the world, and so to embrace him.

2.

Thirdly, nature cannot make a man resolute, not to part with *Christ* upon any tearmes, but willing

3.

rather to beare the greatest persecutions on the one side, and to refuse the greatest offers on the other side, than to part with his Christ.

4.

Fourthly, nature cannot make a man to love God, for this is a distinguishing property of a godly man, and so are all the other affections; now a naturall man cannot hate sinne, cannot grieve for wickednes, as abomination to God: Take this for a rule, that howsoever naturall men may know much, and doe much, yet they have no spirituall affection; they have no spirituall love, hatred, grieve, or joy.

5.

A fifth thing which nature

ture cannot do, and which this supernaturall strength doth, is this, it overcomes and subdues the lustings of our owne spirits, and that not by restraint, but putting in it a contrary lusting; the spirit lusts against the flesh; this supernaturall strength of the spirit, it hemmes us about, it comprehends and keepes us: *Acts 20. 22. Behold I goe bound in the Spirit* (saith St. Paul) *to Ierusalem*: When a mans owne spirit would fall loose, this supernaturall strength staies and strengthens it; when God leaves any of the Saints to nakednesse & emprinesse of his owne spirit, hee becomes as a

no-

nother man : as it was said of *Sampson*, they become weake as water; as wee see in *Elias*, *David*, and *Peter*. But when this supernaturall strength is within us, it sits at the sterne and guides us, and carries us through all. Now then if thou findest that thou hast any strength in thee more than natural, though it be but a little, all thy infirmities shall not exclude thee from the mercies of God in Christ.

Wc

Is it so? bee not then discouraged for any of thy infirmities, but come boldly to the throne of grace: it is a great fault in christians, if because of such, or such an infirmity they bee kept
from

from the throne of grace,
or weaken their assurance :
It was the commendation
of *Iob*, who (notwithstanding
all his infirmities)
would not let goe his righ-
teousnesse.

Iob 27. 5, 6.

Look upon *Aſa*, his infir-
mities were many, as to im-
prison the Prophet ; to trust
to the Physitian more than
God, &c. Yet because there
was an uprightnes of heart,
ſee what testimony the
Lord gives of him in the 2.
Chron. 14. 2. The like in *Ie-
hoſhaphat*. So *David* had
many foule infirmities, yet
because ſound at the heart,
God cal's him, *a man af-
ter his owne heart*. So
Saraah (notwithstanding
her infirmities) is com-
men-

mended as a paterne to wives.. 1. *Pet.* 3. 6. *Rahab*, her infirmities are passed over, and shee commended for her faith and good workes. *James* 2. *Heb.* 11. And therefore (notwithstanding our infirmities) let us trust perfectly in the grace of *Jesus Christ*, and if wee see they doe abound, *let us lay the more on Christ, as needing his helpe the more.*

Use 2.

The second use is from the first Caution : seeing infirmities, though they doe not cut us off from Gods mercy, yet they may bring upon us many troubles ; therefore let us take heed of them ; it is not a smal matter to be subject
to

to infirmities: so it was but
an infirmity in *Rebeckah* &
Jacob, to compasse the bles-
sing by indire&t meanes.

But consider what it
cost him, a great deale of
griefe and paine: And see
how deare *Dauids* infir-
mities did cost him: So
Moses, when he distrusted
God, God would not suf-
fer him to goe into the
Land of *Canaan*; these
were all great afflictions,
which their infirmities
brought upō them, though
they did not cast them out
of Gods favour; there-
fore if wee would avoyde
such troubles, let us be-
ware of living under infir-
mities.

The third use, is from *Use 3.*
the

the second *Cautiō*, that we do not mistake rebellio & wickednes, for infirmities and weaknes. Now seeing wee may easily bee deceived, let us try & examine our selves narrowly; for it is the use of men to shroud themselves under infirmities; they say, *their meaning is good, &c.* but its their infirmity. And on the other side, many are upright in heart, & because they have *infirmities*, they think they have no grace; & therefore we had need to judge both with righteous judgement.

Now to helpe you in your tryall, consider first what an *infirmity* is: Secondly the signes of it.

First, an *infirmatie* is
such

such a weaknesse, as when the heart is upright, yet by reason of some impediment, it cannot doe that good it would, and doth the evill it would not. So that there must be first uprightness of heart, else it is not an infirmity, but iniquity; the heart must be perfect with God in all things, there must be a purpose to please God in all.

Secondly, the reason that it cannot doe so, is from some impediment that hinders: and this ariseth from the rebellion of his flesh, which leads him captive, makes him omit the good that he would doe, & doe the evill he would not.

But now secondly, to come

come to the notes and characters : For a carnall man and a godly man, both be guilty of one and the same infirmities, as to have their hearts wandring in prayer, in reading, and to idlenesse in their calling, &c. Yet these may be wickednesse in the one, but weaknesse in the other; and therefore to know this, consider these signes.

Signes

First, if it be an infirmity, it continues not, but assaults thee by fits, and starts, and so away; and afterwards thou wilt returne to thy former course : As a stone that is throwne up, it flyes as long as the force of the hand that threw it remaines; but after it takes
its

its owne course againe: but if it continue upon thee, it is signe that it is naturall to thee: As a stone, it rests upon the earth, because it is the naturall place of it: my meaning is not, but that an infirmity may assault a man all his life, for so some may, as wee shall shew afterwards: But I say, it comes by fits, and so is gone. This we see in *David*, in *Peter*, and the rest of the Saints, that their infirmities continued not so, but that afterwards they returned to their course againe.

Secondly, when a man amends not upon admonition, it is a signe it is not an infirmity; if a man intends

2.

tends to goe to such a place, and one should meete him, and tell him, this is not the way, and direct him into the right way, hee would thanke him, and returne into the right way, because that is the way hee intended to goe. So if your faces be set towards *Ierusalem*, and one should tell you, here you went out of the way, ye would bee glad of it, and returne.

So it was with *David*, when hee would have slaine *Nabal* in a passion, & *Abigail* met him, and stay-ed him : oh how thankfull he was to God, and her ! it was a signe it was but an
infirm-

infirmity : and so in the case of *Vriah*, when *Nathan* told him, hee was in the wrong : *Prov. 25. 12.* *Hee that reproveth the wise and obedient, it is as a golden eare-ring, or as an ornament of gold* saith *Solomon*; that is, hee whose heart is upright, whose intent is to grow rich in grace, accounts of those that reprove him, as of goldē ornaments : But if a man after admonitiō & reproofe will take his owne course, it is a signe of his wickednesse, and not infirmity.

Againe thirdly, a sinne of infirmity is alwayes with griefe and sorrow of heart for that weakenesse : now what is griefe, but the endeavour

endeavour and strife of the will; when a man cannot attaine to that hee would, or would shun something he cannot avoyd, then hee is grieved and pained: As it is in the body; all the grieve there, is, when a part or member cannot performe its office or function: So in the soule, when it would faine doe such a thing, when the desire of the minde is set on such, or such an object, and it cannot attaine it, then follows grieve: so here, when the heart is drawne up to please God in all things, and something comes in the way that it cannot, & therefore it is grieved, and therefore in

in the 2. *Cor.* 10. 11. the Apostle makes this sorrow a ground of their uprightness, & it is certaine, where this griefe is not mingled, it is no infirmity.

Every sinne of infirmity, produceth a hearty complaint, and an earnest desire, and a serious endeavour to have it cured ; for every infirmity in a body that is quickned, that hath some life in it, and so is sensible of it: As in a disease that a man is sensible of, he tels his friends, or any other that he is in company with, of it, to see if they can helpe him; if they cannot, hee complains to the Physitian, and goes to him to have it cured : so in an
infirm-

infirmity or sicknes of the soule ; an upright heart complaines to his christian friends, I have such an infirmity, what shall I doe to cure it? if they cannot help him, he runnes to him that hath the balme of *Gilead*, to *Iesus Christ*, to have it cured, the 2. *Cor.* 12. 8, 9. This was so in *St. Paul*, he prayed three times that it might be removed ; hee doth not onely complain, as in the 7. of the *Rom* 24. and desire that it may be hea'ed, as in the fore-named place, where hee praies against it; but to this hee adds a serious endeavour, 1. *Cor.* 26. 27. *he beats downe his body, &c.* that is, hee used all good meanes for

for the overcoming of this infirmity; and where this complaint, desire, and endeavour is wanting, it is a signe it is not a mans infirmity, but iniquity.

Fifthly, if thy sinne bee a
sin of infirmity, thou shalt
finde in thy selfe a conti-
nuall reluctancy, and strife
against it: for as there is in
thee a body of sinne; so al-
so a body of grace, which
being contrary to the o-
ther, will not suffer thee
to bee at quiet; the spirit
will be against the flesh, as
well as the flesh against the
spirit: and as the flesh will
not suffer thee to doe a
good duty without resi-
sting, and interrupting
thee; so neither will the
E spirit

5 *Signe.*

spirit suffer thee to sinne without striving against, and opposing it.

But if thou canst sit downe, and let it rest without striving against it, it is no infirmity, but rebellion; therefore try thy selfe by these signes:

Objection I.

But others beside true Christians are able to doe this; for take an unregenerate man, and he wil make the same plea for himselfe, that it is but an infirmity: Indeed hee his overtaken sometimes, but it continues not; and when he is admonished or reprovved, hee findes his heart yeelde to it, and hee grieves, and is sorry for it; hee complains of it,
and

and seekes to helpe it, and strives against it, and therefore these are not sure signes to distinguish him from another.

I answer, that there is something in an unregenerate man which is much like, and comes very neare to that in the regenerate man, he may doe much by that light he hath, but yet there is a broad difference betweene them: for the regenerate man hath another object about which he is conversant, he hath a new light put into his heart, he is renewed in the spirit of his minde, and *hee hath the Law written in his heart, 2 Cor. 3. 3. Heb. 8. 10.* That is, all the spiri-

Ans.

tuall duties that are written in the Law: and hee hath something in his heart that answers to what is in the Law, as *tally* answers to *tally*; or as that fashion in the lead, to that in the mold; or as in a scale character answers to character, impression to impression, so that which is in the Scale, the same is in the waxe: So whatsoever is in the Law of righteousness, if you could see that which is written in the heart by *Iesus Christ*, you should see character for character, print for print; and so, that if there were not a written Law, hee would be a law unto himselfe to obey God, performe

performe duties according to the Law written in his heart : Now when it stands thus with a man, and something, some impediment comes in the way, that he cannot serve God as he would, the law of his members rebelling against the law of his minde, then this troubles and grieves him, this hee complains of, and strives against, and labours to have it mended.

But now a naturall man hath not the Law thus written in his heart, hee hath all things revealed to him within his sphere, to wit, of nature, he ascends no higher : and although hee hath good purposes

Difference.

and meanings, and grieues and complaines, yet all this is for sinnes committed against common light, against naturall conscience, against the second table. Now this is in a lower sphere, they are sorry, but not godly sorrowful, they cannot grieve for omission of spirituall duties, required in the first Table, and so wee see, they are not pitcht on the same objects which makes a greater difference. Now for the further and fuller clearing of this point, wee will answer some questions or cases.

Quest. 1.

First, suppose I have striven long against such a lust, and done what I can,
and

and yet cannot prevaile
against it, shall I say that
this is an infirmity?

To this I answer, first, *Ans.*
that we may be, and are
often deceived in this,
when we have striven long
against it (yet wee grow
worſe) and that the in-
firmity gets ground of us;
for an infirmity may ap-
peare to get strength,
when as it loſeth it. As
when wee cleanse a pond,
it appears more muddie
than it was before, though
in truth it loſeth mud
more and more. Every
contrary, the more it is re-
ſiſted, the more it appears;
as fire, the more cold is a-
bout it, the hotter it is: ſo
an infirmity, the more it is

resisted with the contrary grace, the more it appeares to prevaile, though in truth it loseth ground and strength.

2.

And therefore secondly I give this rule, that though you have striven, yet you must not leave off, but continue your striving still, and yet bee content with Gods hand in suffering such an infirmity in you : for there is a double contentment ; first , that which is opposed to murmuring against Gods hand, and impatiency, and so we must be content to suffer an infirmity on us : we must not repine at Gods proceedings.

Secondly , such a content-

rentment, as is opposed to striving against the infirmity, and so we must not bee content to suffer it on us, but must strive constantly against it: As in a naturall disease wee are to labour to have it cured: but if God will have it lye upon us, wee must be content: So here wee should continually strive against our infirmities; but if God see good to let it rest upon us, wee must be content with his hand: for God doth it that wee might have something to humble us, and Humility is the Nurle of grace, without which, all grace would wither and decay.

And againe, the power

E s . of

of God rests and dwells in an upright heart, and that must have an empty place; and humility makes roome for this, when the power of God dwells in us, when it beginnes to settle in a mans heart : if hee now begin to grow up in conceit of himselfe, this expells the power of God, and crouds it out : And therefore God would have something to bee in us, to keepe us in an humble condition. It is with us as with *Paul*, when he looked on his infirmity; at the first he was impatient, would have no denyall at Gods hand, but have it removed ; hee prayed thrice, that is, often , to this

this purpose. But when he saw it was a medicine, which he thought a poyson, that it served to humble him, & by that meanes the power of God dwelt in him, then he was content, and so should we.

Againe thirdly, I answer, suppose you doe not get victory over your infirmity, and you be no better than you were before, nay lose ground of it, yet strive still, for this strife makes you hold head against it, which otherwise you would not doe: for if when you strive, you doe but keepe your ground, or lose somewhat, then what would become of you, if you did not strive

3. *Ans^r.*

at

at all, should you not goe quite downe the streame, and lose all? yes certainly.

As a man that rowes against the streame, so long as he rowes, he does some good, loseth some ground, and getteth some; but if he leaves rowing, he goes quite downe the streame. And as a man may keepe the field against his enemy, though hee doe not conquer him, yea though hee loseth ground; yet it is one thing to keepe the field, and another thing to bee beaten out, and overcome; now this continuall striving makes a man to keepe the field

gainst his infirmity, and
not to bee overcome, and
therefore its worth the
while to continue stri-
ving.

Lastly, I say, that 4 *Ans.*
though a man is sure of
victory, and that his
cause is never so good,
and that hee goes on a
good ground, yet GOD
may in his wisdom so
dispose of the matter,
that hee may lose the
victory for a time; as
wee see the Israelites
in a good cause where
foiled twice by the *Ben-
jamites*; and so the Dis-
ciples of CHRIST that
were sent on his businesse
to fish, they fished all
night in vaine. And so
Moses

Moses, though he went on Gods errand, yet he prevailed not a good while, but the people were oppressed more than before, *Exod. 5.*

And so *Paul*, though he was called to goe to *Macedonia*, yet see in the story what a many lets hee had, yet afterwards hee planted a Church there ; so when wee strive against any sinnefull lust , our cause is good, and wee have a certaine promise, that wee shall overcome ; even as certaine a promise as *Ioshuah* had, that he should drive out the *Canaanites* , and overcome them, when the Lord en-

cou-

couraged him, saying, I will not faile thee nor forsake thee. So sure a promise have wee in the first of Luke, ver 74. wee shall be delivered from all our enemies, that so we might serve God in holinesse: and therefore be not discouraged, though thy infirmity hang long upon thee, but strive against it, and in the end thou shalt get the victory.

A second question is, *Quest. 2.* whether an infirmity may hang on a man all his life, or no; for some men may say, I have had a sinne which baunted mee all my life hitherto, and may doe till my dying day, for ought as I doe

doe know, and shall
I then say this is an infir-
mity?

Ans.

In this case wee must
distinguish of infirmities,
for infirmities are either
occasionall, which are
occasioned by some other
accident; or habituall, w^{ch}
stay longer by a man, and
these are either naturall to
us, and so proceede either
from our parents, and so
are hereditary to us, even
as some diseases are;
and so wee are subject to
the very same infirmi-
ties that our parents are:
else they are such, as arise
from the temper of our
owne bodies.

Such as proceed from
our naturall complexion,
or

or else such as proceed from custome, which is another nature : now I say, that occasionall infirmities, such as arise from without, and such as come from Sathan, these continue but for a fit, and doe not last all a mans life, God doth usually set Sathan a limited time : Hee may give him liberty to tempt a man, but hee sets him his bounds, thus long hee must doe it, and no longer, usually I say, God doth thus ; for hee may suffer him to doe it longer, but seldome all a mans life. But now for our naturall hereditary infirmities, these may, and doe oftentimes continue

nue for tearme of life :
for they have a roote in
us. Now though you
doe loppe off the bran-
ches, yet the roote will
send forth more againe :
I doe not say, that they
so prevaile, as that they
reigne in a man ; for
Grace will continually
get ground against it : but
it may remaine in a man
so long as hee lives,
and G O D hath a good
end in it ; for he would
glorifie his Sonne in us,
not onely at our first
conversion, but all our
life after ; he would make
us depend on C H R I S T
alwayes, as well for
Sanctification, as for Justi-
fication: hee would make

us see what neede wee have of a dayly Mediatour, and therefore leaves dayly infirmities in our Nature to exercise us with, and to cause us to looke up to Christ, as the *Brazen Serpent* was lift up amongst the *Israe- lites*.

Another case may bee *Quest. 3.*
this, whether a sin against knowledge, and with deliberation may be said to be a sin of infirmity, or no?

To this I answer, that a sinne committed simply with deliberation, cannot be an infirmity: that is, let a man be ever himselfe, without let or impediment, let him be his owne man, let the eye of his under-

Ans.

understanding be as when the Sunne shines, and dispell the mists, so that it may see all before it ; and let his will and affections walke at liberty : and in this case a good man cannot sinne deliberately. See the ground of this, *Romans* the seventh, and the seventeenth *vers.* *If I commit sinne, it is no more I, but sinne that dwelleth in me :* That is, when I am my selfe, my owne man, not bound up with any lust, I thus doe not sinne, it is not I : But in this case, which is the usuall, and indeed all the case of Christians, namely, when any passion, or inordinate affection, or strong distem-

distemper doth either blind the eye of reason, or tye up his affection, so that hee is not at liberty, then I may commit a sin, having long deliberated on it. There may be such distemper of affection as may continue long, and though it doe not wholly blind Reason, yet it blinds most of it. And this was the case of *David* in numbring the people, he deliberated on it: *Joab* tells him the truth, and reasoned the case with him, and yet hee did it: and so we know in murdering *Nriah*, it was consulted on, and a deliberate actiō, but there was much passion mingled with it:

David

David was not himselfe, there was some strong affection that did binde and tye up the use of the regenerate part, as in drunkenesse ; that excesse bindes up for a time the use of reason, so that he could not walke in the liberty of his spirit, and therefore it was his infirmity : We may see, that passion overcame *David* for the time, by his coming out of these finnes : For when after hee came to himselfe, and saw the greatnesse of it, as usually when a sinne is committed, (and not before) then wee see the grievousnesse of it ; then *David* confessed hee had sinned, and

and done very foolishly.

So a Christian may fall into a course of worldly mindednesse, or the like, and this lust may hang upon a man, and yet be a sinne of infirmity : 1. when a man is himselfe, hee sees it, and repents it.

Secondly, I answered, *Answer 2.* that in this deliberation, which is mingled with passion, there is a double error ; namely, when a man erres either about the ultimate and last end, or when he erres onely in the meanes. Now a regenerate man hath set up God for his last end, whom he must never forsake, nor part with for all the

the world, but in some particular thing hee may erre: As when he thinkes he may doe such a thing, and yet keepe his God still, or else hee may get pardon of sinne quickly, or else minceth his sinne with distinctions, &c. and so may commit a sinne deliberately: For this is a true rule, that any sin is a sinne of infirmity, so long as we doe erre about the last end, though in some particular we are out, concerning the meanes and way to it.

But now an unregenerate man, hee deliberates after this manner; I would have God for my God, I would not bee without God

God in the world, but there is such a pleasure, such a profit, which I must needs have, and rather than hee will lose it, hee will part with God; thus hee makes pleasure his uttermost end. A man loves his life, and loves the use of his members; as of his hand, his arme, or his legge, &c. But hee had rather lose his hand, or any of his members than his life. So a wicked man covets his pleasure more than his life, hee cannot live if hee have it not; and God hee esteemes but as one of his members, which hee would not willingly want: But a Christian hath God for his
F chiefe

chiefe end, and never sins with deliberation, about this end: he will not forget God upon any termes, but may erre in the way, thinking he may fulfill such a lust, and keepe G O D too.

Question 4.

Another question is, whether a regenerate man may not fall into some presumptuous sins, and so commit a sin that is not of infirmity?

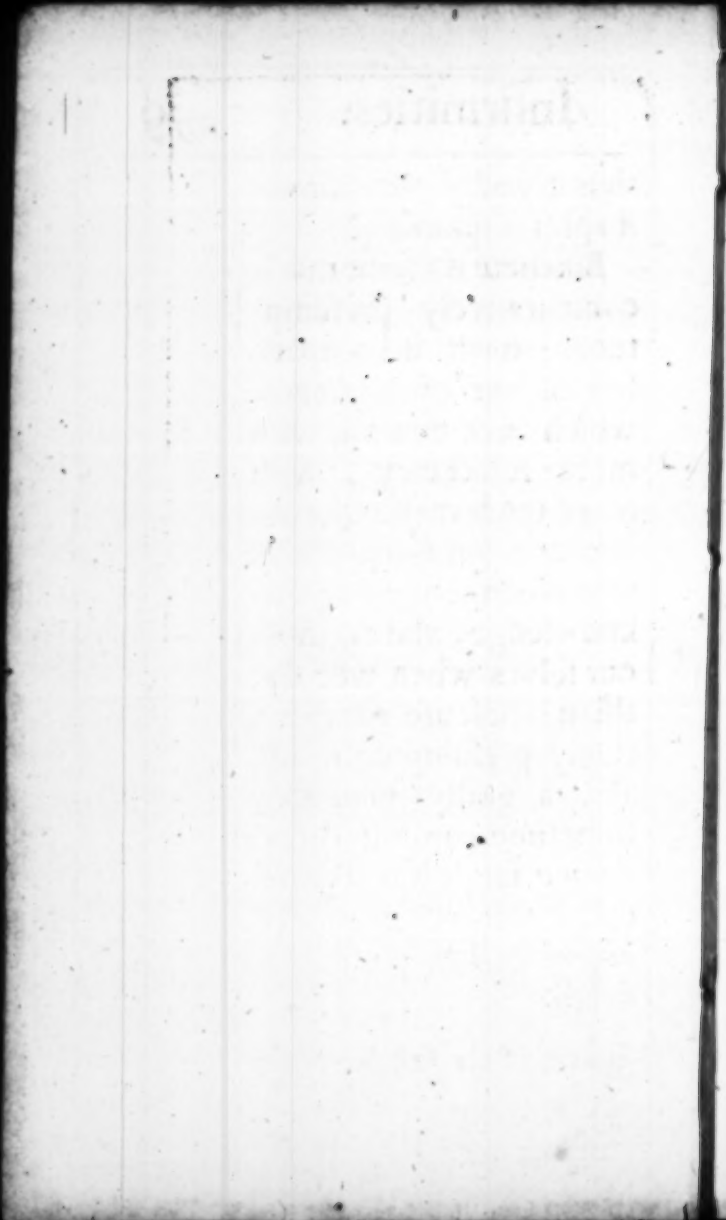
Ans. I.

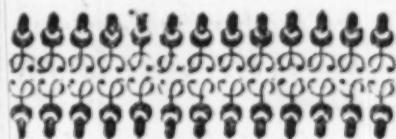
For answer to this, we must know, that a presumptuous sinne is of two sorts: First, a sinne that is simply presumptuous, when wee know such a thing to be sinfull, and yet presuming on Gods mercy, wee will doe it; I say thus

thus a godly man cannot
sin presumptuously

But there is a sinne that is
comparatively presumptuous ; to wit, in comparison of our other finnes, which wee commit with more reluctancy , with more tenderesse of conscience : but some others wee commit more against knowledge , and are more our selves when wee doe them ; these are comparatively presumptuous sins, and a godly man may sometime commit them : As we see, it was *Dauids* case in the matter of *Vriah*, when hee plotted his death.

The end of the first SERMON.





THE
SECOND
SERMON,

BY

JOHN PRESTON

Dr. of D.

Math. 12. 18, 19, 20.

18. **B**Ehold my ser-
vant whom I
have chosen,
my beloved, in whom my
soule is well pleased : I
will put my spirit upon
him, and hee shall
shew judgement to the
Gentiles.

F 3 19. He

19. *He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man heare his voice in the streetes.*

20. *A bruised reed shall hee not breake, and smoaking flaxe shall be not quench, till hee send forth Iudgement unto victory.*



HAVE made choice of these words for the Affinity they have with that Text, whereof wee have solately spoken in this place, that out of this Text wee might prosecute the point already entred upon by occasion of the prayer of that good King in the former

mer Text : for Christ is heere brought in shewing Judgment to the Gentiles, and doing it in a meeke and tender manner, as *ver.* 18, 19. which manner is heere illustrated by the consideration of the persons to whom this Judgment was declared, or shewed, who are here expressed under the similitudes of a bruised reed and smoaking flaxe.

A Reed, the weakest plant, that is, not a strong Tree ; yet this a broken one, none of the strongest : So Flaxe, that takes the fire a great deale sooner than a Reed will, especially if it be dry, and have hung neere the fire, but

most of all, if it be already smoaking, the least sparke will doe that; yet Christ will not quench that little sparke.

Then he shews the issue of this teaching, *till hee bring forth iudgement into victory*: that is, untill that little sparke have got the mastery, or that hee may, &c. and so it is a reason of his tender dealing; because otherwise, it roughly dealt withall, it never would prevaile: As a little coale, if it bee hard blowne, is soone extinguished; but if nourished, and gently dealt with, increaseth to a mighty flame: So the least grace, though as weake as a bruised,

fed, crushed reed, or as small as a spark of fire, that onely makes the flaxe to smoake, yet if cherished by Christ, it will increase, & come at last to victory, so that in these verses yee have foure things.

First, the office of our Saviour *Iesus Christ*, which is, to teach men judgement.

Secondly, the manner how he doth it; namely, with tendernes and meeknesse.

Thirdly, the persons, namely, such as are very weake in grace and holinesse.

Fourthly, the issue, namely, that *He will bring forth judgement into victory.*

For the first and second of these.

Doct. 1.

The office (I say) of Christ ; is to teach men judgement , and this hee doth with much tender- nesse, compassion, and gentlenesse: for the former part, that Christs office is to shew men judgement.

1.

First, to teach men the just and righteous wayes of God ; so the word is taken in the old Testa- ment, to enlighten men to judge of the wayes of God. There bee two ends why Christ came; first, to justifie, and secondly, san- ctifie us, to give us forgive- nesse of sinnes, 3 *Act.* last, 5 *Act.* 31. therefore Christ is often compared
to

to a shepheard, in the 10. of *St. Iohn*, (and many other places) that feeds his flocke, and he is also called *Iohn* 1. 9. *the true light, which lighteneth the world, and every man that cometh into the world:* (that is) if *Christ* had not come into the world, there would not have beene one sparke of *G O D S* image left in man, neither *Adam*, nor his posterity should have knowne any thing, but a cloud of darkenesse should have seized on mens minds. But now by *Christs* comming every one, even the wicked have this benefit, that they have seene common light: *Christ* lightens every

ry one that commeth into the world, in some sort reacheth them so much as shal make the inexcusable.

2.

It is his office to teach men, and hee doth it in the next place, with much gentlenes and tendernes: this we will easily grant, if we consider who it is that teacheth, and who we are that are taught, a rude people, so hard to conceive, so ready to forget, therefore hee had neede have much gentlenes. We say whē one quickly conceives a thing, and then goes to teach it to another that cannot apprehend it, it will weary him, if hee bee not very meeke. An angry man, when he findes any impe-
di-

diment, hee flies on the face of it presently ; and a proud man, he will not beare so much, nor waite so long. But now Christ is meeke, and thinkes not much to waite from day to day, to drop in here a line, and there a line, here a little, and there a little: hee teacheth with much weeknesse; the reason is in the verse before ; Christ deales with us according to his nature and disposition. Now as it is said before, hee shall not strive nor cry ; when the Pharisees would have killed him, rather than he would strive with them, hee departed, yeelding to them, went his wayes from them.

them. And againe it is said, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets, al- luding to an action of his, when he had wrought a great work, he bad them not utter the matter: he came not with pompe, and majesty as great men, that cannot come into a place, but the towne must ring of them; hee deterres no man by his greatnes, from comming unto him, but was of an humble and meeke disposition. And according as his Nature was, so hee dealt with us, teaching us with much tenderneffe, and meek- nesse: then there is no rea- son, why wee should bee discouraged for any of
our

our infirmities, for Christ will beare with them. If he were not God, and man; that is, if hee were not patient in an infinite manner, hee could not beare with us: but he is infinitely patient, therefore be not discouraged: in *Ezekiel* 34. 16. *ver.* he compares himselfe to a shepherd, and (saith hee) *I will seeke that which was lost, & bring againe that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen the weak: where we see, there bee foure causes of weakness.*

Causes 4.

First, men are apt to straggle out of the way through vanity and weakness

I.

nes of their owne spirits. Now when a man doth so weaken and lose himselfe through his owne folly, then Christ seeks him, and will not suffer him to bee utterly lost.

David wandred as well as *Saul*, but God sought *David* againe, and would not lose him : therefore wee see, that *David* delights to use this Metaphor in *Psal.* 119. 176.

Againe, a temptation may come on a man which is too strong for him, and drive him out of the way ; as sheepe when theeves come, are driven out of the fold, whither else they would not have gone: these Christ promi-
seth

seth to bring backe againe:
as *David* recovered the
sheepe out of the paw of
the Lion and Beare, so
Christ will recover his
children that were carried
away with such strong
temptations.

Again, suppose there
be some wound made in
the soule by some actuall
sinne, if there bee some
breach made into the
conscience, *Christ* pro-
miseth in the next place
to make up this breach,
that he will binde up that
which was broken: a man
may complaine that hee
is weake, and ready to
straggle as before: there-
fore *Christ* promiseth to
strengthen that which is
weake,

weake, that is, he will lead them on to a greater measure of strength dayly, whereby they shall bee able to get victory over such infirmities: *Isaiah 40.*

11. He shall feede his flocke like a shepheard, hee shall gather the Lambes with his arme, and shall carry them in his bosome, and shall guide them with young: Here wee see, that in the fold of Christ there is this difference of sheepe.

Some are strong that can goe apace; some are weaker, that cannot keepe pace with the other, and they are compared to the Ewes with young, that can goe but a slow pace: Some are so weake, that they
must

must be carried, else they cannot goe. Now those that are so weake, that they cannot comprehend Christ, hee is ready to comprehend them: when men are weake, and have not that use of their faith which others have, to lay hold on Christ; Christ will take hold on them, and carry them in his bosome, and those that are weake, and cannot keepe pace with others, he will guide them, and drive them on, according to their pace, and hee will drive on the strong according to their strength; and though hee beare with the weake, hee expects more from the strong:

See

See how *Iacob* ordered his flocke in that manner that he would not out-drive them : and shall not God doe so also, who hath taught the Husbandman this discretion, *Isaiah 28.* use it himselte? surely he will : in the 1. of *St. Iam.* ver. 5. *If any man lacke wisdom, let him aske it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth none, and it shall be given unto him :* That is, you shall finde this difference betweene God and man.

If one be foolish, and goes to man, man is ready to despise him, and laugh at him : but if hee aske wisdom at Gods hands, he gives it to him liberally,

ly, and twits him not with his folly, upbraides him not with his weaknesse: looke how a tender mother deales with her child, the more its weaknesse is, the more tender shee is of it; so doth Christ guide us according to our weaknesse, and tender us the more, because wee are meeke and humble: and therefore wee have no cause to bee discouraged, for that weaknesse which wee finde in our selves. Wee are indeed exceeding backward to beleieve this, and therefore see what's added: *Ezek. 34. 16* *He saith he will feede them with judgement:* That is, with wisdom and discretion:

tion : for hee is wise , and knows how to feed them, according to their weake capacities, and so his Wisedome may bee a ground that he will tender us.

Againe, his power may shew that he will doe this with us, because hee is able to make crooked things streight : If a man meete with a crooked piece of wood, which hee would streighten for his use , and cannot ; hee throwes it away, because he cannot make it streight. Men if they are to deale with a Scholler that is heard to learne , they give him over, because hee is incapable ; they cannot make

make him conceive instructions. But Christ is able to make crooked wayes streight, to quicken those that are dull, to put new natures into us; and therefore hee will not deale so harshly with us.

Againe, if there be any grace in us, it is his owne worke, and therefore it is for his credit to perfect it.

1 Theff. 5. 24. vers. Phil. 1. 6. he should not be faithfull else, if hee should not doe it; but hee will doe it: as a worke-man loves his owne workes, and will not leave them unperfect, so neither will Christ. Againe, it is his Fathers will, that those who are weake should bee cherished, his delight

delight is still in leading them from one degree of strength to another ; for his power is more teene in them, and he hath more thanks from them, as hee had from *Mary Magdalen*.

Object.

But some will say, oh but my heart is so untoward, that I feare I never shall overcome?

Answ.

Consider well that place the 42 of *Esay*, 5, 6. vers, Thus saith the Lord, Hee created the heavens, and stretched them out ; hee that spread forth the earth, and that which commeth out of it ; hee that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walke therein : I the Lord have called thee, &c. Consider who

who it is that created the Heavens, the Earth, and the buds thereof; that giveth breath, &c. is it not God? now then suppose he findeth nothing in the nature of man, but an emptines of grace and holines; is it not he that made the heavens when there was none before? and then is not hee able to create grace in a mans heart?

Againe, looke on the earth in the winter, it is very hard, a man would think it should never bring forth flowers, yet in the spring it puts forth many kind of fruites & flowers: so though thy heart be as hearbs in the winter, yet God is able to make grace

G sprout

sprout forth there, as flowers in the spring; besides it is he that giveth breath unto the people; that is, if you looke upon all the creatures in the world, yet none was able to put life in them, but G O D. So though your soules be like unto a clod of earth; hee is able to put life into them, the breath of life, as he did at the first; he is able to enlighten and enlarge them further, and therefore bee not discouraged for thy weaknesse.

1. *Vse.*

Is it thus? that Christ teacheth in judgement, and that with much compassion and tenderneffe? then this should incourage men to come unto Christ, to learne

learne of him, to take his yoke on them : this use we finde to be made of this Doctrin in the 11. of St. *Mat. 28, 29, and 30 verses, Come unto mee all yee that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you : take my yoke on you, and learne of me, and you shall finde rest to your soules : for my yoke is easie, & my burden is light :* that is, let a man looke upon *Christ* and his wayes, and usually they are discouraged with the strictnesse of Religion, they thinke they shall bee too straight laced, and bound with fetters, that are too straight for them. No (*saith Christ*) feare not, for I am meeke and low.

ly, and such shall you finde
my dealings to be towards
you.

There be two things in
the Text to move us to
come in to Christ, and
to bee subject to his
yoke.

I.

First, the nature of the
thing it selfe, it is an easie
yoke: Before you come
to me, you are like men in
prison; but when you
come to me, I loosen you,
and set you at liberty:
before you were as in
darknesse, but when you
come to me, I enlighten
you: before you were as
men in sicknesse, but when
you come to mee, I
strengthen and heale
you.

A

A second thing, is from the person you have to deale with, that is, Christ: *Come unto me, for I am exceeding gentle, and meeke,* and such shall you finde mee: *John Baptist* and *Moses* came roughly, but Christ is come in tender-nesse; if you be subject to infirmities, hee is ready to passe them by; if you bee overcome with them, hee is ready to recover you: and therefore now come in to Christ; submit your selves to his yoke, to his teaching and discipline, to his rule and government which is so easie. But if you wil not, he will rule you with a rod of Iron, and breake you in peeces

like a Potters vessell; if you stand out with him, then none is so rough as he, and therefore observe him.

If a King should say at his Coronation, he would open all the prison-doors; would not offenders take that opportunity? or if a Creditor should say to his debtors, come to me at such a time, and I will forgive you and your debts, and give you in your bonds: would the debtor over-slippe that time?

So let us, when Christ offers to himselfe to teach us with such tenderneffe, goe to him, take that time especially; considering that

that these are such times
as are in Gods owne
power; those things that
are in our owne power,
we may doe what we will
with, and take our owne
time: but these times are
not in our hands, but in
Gods; and therefore take
heede of over-slipping
that time, when Christ
carries himselfe as a Nurse
unto us : there is a time
for every purpose, and
that lasts but for a season,
Eccles. 3. 11, 12. There
is a certaine season which
God hath appointed for
every purpose, there is a
time when the businesse
may be well done, and
if that be let slippe, it
will not succcede, but hee

will be snared in an evill time, because hee knoweth not the good time.

Therefore when it is past, his misery is great. So chiefly there is a time of receiving grace, but this time a man knowes not, yet he is undone if he passe it; therefore take heed of overslipping any offer of grace: procrastination in all things is dangerous, but here especially. Now that which deceives us, is the deferring: but we must not deferre one day, and say, then wee shall doe it another; no, for then we shall let the time be past: as in a chariot, the wheelles runne neere one another, but they never
over.

overtake one another.
And as in a clocke the
minutes are but little di-
stant one from another,
yet none of them are to-
gether : so the devill by
his cunning thinkes to
make you doe it now, and
by and by , till he have
made you passe your
houre: therefore take heed
of deferring, and come in,
whilst Christ doth ex-
presse himselfe thus unto
you in these tearmes,
whiles he dealesthus ten-
derly and gently with
you. It is a very dange-
rous thing to lose the op-
portunity of receiving
Christ when hee offers
himselfe, when hee deales
gently, which wee gather

G s from

from that place, thus; if there bee a time for every purpose, then certainly there is a time for the greatest businesse that a man hath to doe on the earth, that is, to come in to *Christ*, and receive him; and if the misery of man be great upon him, if hee let slip other seasons, much more if hee neglect this; but now there is a time for every purpose, as these places testifie. And to instance in some few, *Gebezi* tooke a gift of *Naaman*, *2. Kings* 5. saith *Elisha* to him, *is this a time to take gifts?* there was a time when thou mightest have done it, at another time, of another
per.

person thou mightest, but this was not a time : for *Naaman* was a stranger, and did not know the customs, and *Elisha* would give him his health freely, and therefore it was not the time ; and therefore wee see the misery was great, the leprosie clave to him and his posterity, because hee knew not the time ; so *Saul* because hee sacrificed before *Samuel* came, the thing hee did was good, but he took not the right time ; he was too hasty, he knew not his time ; and so his misery was great upon him ; God tooke the kingdome from him, and gave it to his neighbour, 1. *Sam.* 13. 13,

14. So *Jacob*, when hee sought the blessing, hee thought hee did a good thing, but hee did not stay the time, so the misery was great upon him: see what a long peregrination, what a hard service hee did undergoe under his uncle *Laban*, and all because hee knew not the right time. So the *Israelites* when they sought a King, if they had stayed their due time, God would in his due time have revealed unto them, that *David* should be their King, for hee had so appoynted it: and therefore because they missed of the time, their misery was great on them; so likewise for other purposes,

poses, so for this, there is a time for a man to come in, and take the offer that *Christ* makes, a time when he is kind and gentle, and ready to receive us; if wee know not this time, and so overslip it, our misery will bee great upon us. Now then it is very requisite to know and finde out this time; because if wee chouse Gods time, God will joyne with us in the worke, and so it will bee done with ease, *Eccles. 3. 9, 10.* *A time to love,* &c. what profit hath he that worketh, in that wherein hee laboureth? I have seen the travell which God hath given to the sonnes of men, to be exercised in it: (that is)

is) men take much travell
and pains to bring their
purposes & ends to passe;
when they doe not take
Gods time, and what pro-
fit have they by it?

Now if you will open
when Christ knocks at
the doore, harken to the
motions of the spirit, and
blow them, and nourish
them, and it will bee done
with much ease; but if
you misse this time, your
misery is great; you may
desire, and crye, and pray,
and never the better;

*Eccles. 9. 12. For a man al-
so knoweth not his time; as
the fish is, that is taken in
an evill net, and as the
birds that are caught in a
snare, so are the sonnes of
men.*

men snared in an evill time, when it falleth suddenly upon them : There is a double time, as wee may gather out of these words ; a good and acceptable time, so called, because God is then ready to accept and receive us, if we come in that time ; and if we doe not make use and embrace that good and acceptable time, then the evill time shall fall upon us, we shall be caught in an evill net and snare: there may bee a good net come on us, as affliction, sicknesse, and the like, may come upon us, so as to doe us good, as we catch at some things to preserve them alive for
a bet.

a better condition than they were in: but now if wee over-slippe the good time, than the evill net shall fall upon us; sickness, death, and destruction shal come on us suddenly as a snare: that wee may see the ground of this, see what Christ saies, *Luke 19. 42, 43.* If thou haast knowne, even thou, at least in this thy day, the thing which belong to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes: He speakes it to the Jewes, who yet enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and he tells them that the time of their visitation was past.

So that a man may have the

the liberty to live under the ministry, long after that God hath rejected him: *Christ* came then and visited the *Jews*, and al profited nothing; then they were like the Figge-tree that *Christ* cursed, after their day was passed: and this day may be long before a mans death, he may live long rejected: and therefore let us take heed we doe not stand out our time. In outward things wee are wont to anticipate and prevent time: so *Iacob* got the blessing before the time: and the *Israelites* sought for a King before the time: and so men would be hastily rich; and so for pleasures,
if

if wee should stay Gods time, to take it after labour, we should doe well, but wee prevent our time here ; but in spirituall things wee are too slow, let slip our time, to come after : But this is dangerous, take heede of it : It's a good note which the *Stoicks* have ; some things are in our owne power, and in them wee may use our owne liberty ; but other things are in the power of others, and then we must take the opportunity while it's offred ; wee must faile when the winde blowes. Now of this latter kinde are spirituall things, and therefore wee must take the time that's

that's offred : Indeede if the time were in our owne power, or if we knew the time, then wee might delay : *Acts* 1. 11. It is not for us to know the times which the Father hath kept for his owne power, and no man knoweth what shall bee, neither can any tell it him, and therefore take heede of letting slippe the time : Sathan deceives us in this, just as the Lapwing doth, when a man is neare her nest, shee flyeth a little before a man, and then lighteth, and flyeth a little further, till it hath led us quite out of the way.

So Sathan makes us deferre

deferre a little longer, and a little longer, till our time bee past ; and therefore deferre now no longer, but come in unto Christ whiles hee offers himselfe in a loving and tender manner: And so much for the office of Christ, which is to teach, and his manner of teaching, with much meeknesse and gentlenesse.

Now followes the third thing to be considered, and that is the persons that *Christ* hath to deale with, such as are very meeke, compared here to a bruised reed, and smoaking flaxe. A reed is of it selfe very weake, and shaken with

with every wind, and not
onely so, but broken with
the least force. So a Chri-
stian may be subject to
much unevennesse, and
inconstancy in his wayes,
shaken with every temp-
tation; but when this shall
be a broken reed, this is a
further degree of weak-
nesse: and so for smoaking
flaxe, it must bee an exceed-
ding little sparke which
will not cause flaxe to
smoake, and yet with such
weake ones hath *Christ* to
deale: he will not breake
the bruised reed, nor
quench the smoaking
flaxe.

Now from the persons
that *Christ* teacheth, that
is, weak ones, observe this
point.

That

That there may be exceeding great weaknesse in true Christians ; wee see in the text they are compared to the weakest things, a bruised reed, and smoking flaxe : the first reason of it is this.

Reas. I.

Because it pleaseth *Christ* in working grace, to doe it by degrees ; hee might have perfected the worke of grace altogether, as he did in the work of creation in an instant ; but hee dealeth with us now according to the course of generation ; as a plant is first sowne, then riseth by degrees : So we in the beginning of grace are exceeding small ; hee heales us as hee did the blinde

blinde man, not altogether, but by little and by little.

First, we see more darkly and confusedly, and then more cleerely; and hee heales our lamnesse, not altogether by setting us on our feet at the first, but hee gives us strength by degrees: first to goe on crouches, as it were, or to creepe or step forward, and afterwards to goe more strongly; and hence it is that there are many weak, because grace is but weakly wrought in them. Now the reason why *Christ* doth thus lead us on by degrees, is first to humble us, and to let us see that the worke is not of our

ourselves, it is God that *workes* in us according to his good pleasure ; for when we are brought on by degrees thus, it makes it evident unto us, that we receive strength from another. Secondly, hee doth it for his owne glory, that wee might know the righteousness of *Christ*: in the 8. of *Deut.* 2. 17. there is set downe these 2. ends, why the Lord led them through the wilderness, and not the nearest way.

First, Gods end in it was to humble them.

Secondly, to let them know that hee did it for his owne sake : So hee doth here to humble them,

them, and for his own glory; God doth not perfect grace at the first, but by degrees, and likewise that they may know his power, that it is his strength in which they walke, that if a Christian should be left to himselfe, hee would quickly finde that it is Christs power that hee must walke in, that must goe along with him to guide him, and to deliver him from his enemies.

Now for the use of this, it may serve to comfort weake Christians; what though thou art not at that growth as other Christians are? yet be of good comfort; a reed hath life in it as well as the stron-

Vse.

H

gest

est oake ; what though thou canst not see the flame of an holy conversation, but only the fume ? yet you may know there is fire : men that are in the covenant , are like men that are gone in at a doore, or into a Church, or the like : Some are further in than others, but yet all are in : So though the weake be not so forward as another, yet hee may bee in, though not so farre in: for a budd drawes sappe from the root, as well as the fruit ; why so thou must be a budd, and have grace in some measure, though not in so great a measure; yet thou maist bee a true Christian, though

though a weake Christi-
an.

But you will say, that it
is a hard thing to be per-
swaded, that God will
accept of such a weakling
as I am.

Objection.

Therefore consider the
nature of *Christ*, for wee
are deceived in that as in
other things: in 2. of the
*Heb. vers. 17. Wee see that
it behoved Christ in all
things to be made like unto
his brethren, that hee might
bee a mercifull and faith-
full high Priest, &c. Christ
is our high-Priest; now
there are three Offices of
our high Priest:*

Ans.

First, hee was to receive
every sacrifice.

*Three offices
of Christ.*

Secondly, to offer sacri-
fice

face dayly.

3. Thirdly, to lay the wood together, and preserve the fire.

Now then it belongs to Christ, to receive every sinner that comes to him, as it did to *Aaron*, to receive the sacrifice; and if Christ should not doe all that belongs to his office, he should be an unfaithfull High Priest: But he is called a faithfull High Priest: If then a sinner come to Christ, and saith, Lord, I know that God is a consuming fire, and I dare not come to him in my selfe, but in the merit of that Sacrifice which thou offeredst, Christ cannot reject him; but sayes hee to him,

him, *Come unto mee, and I will receive you*: If they doe but come, hee cannot but receive them, else hee should bee unfaithfull in his office, and in his promise: But he is faithfull in both, and not onely so, but hee is a mercifull High Priest, and so will pittie them that come unto him: and if you have many sins daily renewed, many infirmities and imperfections; why, it is Christs office to renew the sacrifice daily; he offers up a daily sacrifice for us, even his owne righteousness; and as he doth this for justification, so for sanctification also. When Sacrifice was laid on the Altar,

the Priests could not bring fire from Heaven to consume it; but God sent it, and so shewed that it was accepted: wee may lay the wood together, but cannot bring fire from heaven: But Christ is a Priest of an higher order than was *Aaron*; hee will kindle this fire of Sanctification, and encrease it, and keepe it still burning; it's his office so to doe: and therefore doubt not but Christ will receive you.

Objection.

Oh, but this were some comfort, if I had assurance that I had but one sparke of true grace in me: therefore how shall I know that?

I an-

I answer, there be five *Answer*
 signes laid downe in the *5. Signes.*
 Text, whereby a man
 may come to know this:

First, in these words,
Hee will bring forth judge-
ment into victory: That is
 the first thing that Christ
 doth, even to set up a
 right Judgement in thee:
 When the Apostle prayes
 for the *Philippians*, hee
 prayes, *That they may a-*
bound in knowledge and
judgement.

Secondly, there is
 life in a bruised Reede, as
 in the strongest Oake.

Thirdly, there is
 fire, though never so
 small, as in the strongest
 Oake.

Fourthly, there is

H 4 a

a. Combate.

5. Fifthly, there is victory.

I. Now for the first of these, consider whether Christ hath set up his judgement in thee: when the Apostle prayes that the *Philippians* may *abound in Knowledge, and in all Iudgments*: That is, that they may discern of things that differ, and hee takes it for granted that it was right, else hee would not pray for the encrease of it.

So that when a man can discern of things that differ, when hee can put a difference betweene the wayes of God, and
fiene,

fin, between spirituall pri-
viledges, and outward va-
nities, between truth and
falshood ; then there is
a light come into a man,
and this makes them pure
and blamelesse, fills them
with the fruites of righte-
ousnesse: now then if thou
hast this in any degree,
thou hast the spirit of
Christ : As it was in
Christ, Esay 11. 2, 3. Hee
had the spirit of wisdom
and understanding, the spi-
rit of might, the spirit of
knowledge, and of the feare
of the Lord. So is it in all
his members, they have
the same spirit, and doe
not judge according to
the sight of the eye, or
the hearing of the eare,

H s but

but judge righteously : for there is a two-fold judging; first, when our eye or eare judge, and wee judge according to that ; when we send out our spirits, and heare what they report , and this is ready to bring in a false report, to say that sinne is sweete and pleasant, and it will represent grace as vile, because it judgeth according to outward appearance ; and the outside of Christianity is base, in regard of mis-reports , that are brought up of it: As the tenne messengers brought an evill report upon the land of *Canaan*; and in regard of the outside of it in those that professe it , who are
many

many times poore & contemptible men, & in regard of the infirmities and failings of the Saints. Now if a man judge by the eye, that sees nothing but the outside, he will esteeme of religion as base. But it is otherwise when a man hath the spirit of judgement; he will looke further into things; he pries into the inside; and then hee will not judge of the wayes of God; and of sin as the world doth; but will see a basenesse in sin, and an excellency in religion, because he is enabled to judge aright.

For Christ, as hee makes his Princes and Priests, so hee makes them Prophets likewise,

likewise, to judge and discern of things aright, and this hee doth by opening the eyes, *Acts 26. 18.* that is, good things in themselves are very excellent, and desireable, but wee see them not till our eyes are opened; there is a vaile drawne over our eyes till Christ removes it, and opens them.

Question.

What is that?

Answer.

Why, Christ he elevates and raiseth up that light which wee have unto an higher degree, and that is by putting a new light into their soules, *Iohn 1. 9.* that is, the true light; which lightneth every one that cometh into the world.

Before the Creation
was

was compleate, there was some light, the first day after the Sunne was created, and after the fall hee enlightned every one that came into the world; (that is) all men have some light or other by Jesus Christ; before there was no sparke of light in us, but all that wee have is by Christ: that glimmering light which is in naturall men, is but a sparke of the new Image, which Christ hath put on us: But in this, Christ raiseth up the light higher and higher; and when this new light is put in us, then a mans eyes are said to be opened, when hee can see round about him, and

and discerne that excellency in grace, and that baseness in sinne, which were in them before, but they could not see it. As the Chariots and horsemen were with *Gehezi*, but his eyes were not opened to see them : And so the Well was neare *Hagar*, but shee saw it not till God had opened her eyes, and shewed it unto her.

So death and destruction may be very neere an unregenerate man, and he not see it till God opens his eyes : so also a Christian may have ground of comfort, and he not know it, till God sheweth it unto him : Now where a mans eyes

eyes are opened, that hee can see thus round about him; then hath Christ set up this judgement in a man.

But here now all the businesse will, bee to discern between the common judgement of a man, and this right judgement which Christ sets up in him, which difference is seene by these particulars.

First, they differ in the authors of them: another mans judgement is borne and bred within him; but this comes from above from God: it is a new judgement, yea, a renewed judgement *Ephes. 4.23.*

Be ye renewed in your spirits

rits & minds : When thou hast such a judgement of sin and godlinesse, which thou hadst not before ; this is a new judgement.

Secondly, they differ in regard of the subject : this new light is alwayes in a pure heart ; the other not : so long as the heart is overwhelmed with lusts, so long the eye of the soule is dimme, as in a mist, that wee cannot see before us ; but Christ takes away this mist: *Titus 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. When the grace of God hath appeared, &c.* then wee see cleerely : whereas the unregenerate man never judgeth aright of an holy way ; because his heart is full of lusts, which
are.

are as mists, that they cannot see.

Thirdly, they differ in the measure. Common light will perswade you of common truth, or of truths in generall, that such and such things are commendable; but if you come to a particular action, and practise that, you must doe this, and this, here it fayles him: But this right judgement helps a man to doe particular actions; it enlightens him in every particular; takes away all objections, and guides you in the right way: 2. Tim. 2. 7. *Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things: (that is) I have told thee these things*

things in generall, but when you come to particular, the Lord must direct you.

4. Fourthly, they differ in the growth : this right judgement growes more and more, it is as the light that shines clearer & clearer, till it be perfect day : *Esay 42. 3, 4. Hee shall bring forth judgement unto truth* : when this judgement is put into a man, every thing adds something to it : A good heart makes use of every thing, but another man that hath but a common sight, doth not grow, but is apt to be offended ; and at length that light that hee hath, turnes into injudiciousnes of

of minde, you shall finde it decrease more and more,
2. Tim. 3. 13. Evill men waxe worse and worse; for that light of theirs is but like a flower, which, when it is at the best, fades and decays; and the reason of it is, because God giveth a man leave to use that common wisdom that he hath for a time: but when they doe not improve that knowledge that they have, then God takes it away from them, and turnes it into foolishnesse, as wee may see *Rom. 1. 21. Because they changed the truth of God into a lye*, therefore they were given up to vile affections: *1. Cor. 1. 19. God will*

will destroy the wisdom of the wise, & bring to nought the understanding of the prudent.

5.

Fifthly, they differ in the effects ^{wh} they produce; for first, this right judgement brings forth poverty of spirit, when as before a man thought hee had some good things in him, now hee sees he is nothing. Saving wisdom makes him see himselfe empty of all that was good, makes him see that before hee knew nothing, as he ought to know; but now common judgement breeds pride, it puffes a man up, 1. Cor. 3. 1, 2. and makes him preferre himselfe before his brethren.

Second-

Secondly, this right judgment, it causeth a man to know every thing, as they ought to know it, when hee knowes a right use of it. As for example, a man that knowes his ground which hee owes, when hee knowes what graine it will best beare, what tillage and manure is best for it ; then a man knowes his toole as hee ought, when hee knowes how to use it as hee ought.

So a man that knowes sinne as he ought, when hee lookes upon it so, as to lose it, and loath it, then knows he the promises as he ought, when hee makes that use of them as hee should

2.

should make, when as other men minde them no more than their old shoos; and then wee know forgiveness of finnes as wee ought, when we thinke it the most precious thing in the world: and so if wee knew earthly vanities as wee ought, wee would weane our selves from them, yea, from all worldly things: as the lusts of the flesh, and pleasure, the lust of the eye, and riches, honour, and pride of life, or any other excellency in the world; be it what it can be, wee will not then endure it.

Now when a mans eyes are opened, and hee is savingly enlightened, and knowes

knowes these things as he ought, then hee lookes on carnall pleasures, and sees they will bring bitterneſſe in the end: when he looks upon riches, hee ſees that to be true which is ſaid of them: Why wilt thou ſet thy heart upon them, which are as nothing? hee ſees they are uncertain, inſufficient, and not able to ſatiſſie his ſoule: And for the pride of life, or any excellency which before he greatly prized, now he accounts it vile and contemptible; this the ſpirit of right judgement enables a man to doe.

Thirdly, the ſingleneſſe of the eye is another effect of this, it teacheth
a man

a man to looke on things with a single eye: *Matth.* 6 22, 23. There is mention made of a single eye, and of an evill eye: if a man hath a single eye, hee will not looke on God and on the World, but on God alone, cleave to him, and serve him alone; the other is called a wicked eye, because there be many lusts on which it looks. But this right judgement makes us looke on God singly, abstracted from all other things.

4

A fourth effect which this right judgement pronounceth, is, Conversion of the whole man unto God: *if thine eye bee single, thy whole body is full of light,* (that

(that is,) shall bee set straight ; and when this is not done, it hinders our conversion unto God, as we may see in the 13. of *Matth.* 15. wee cannot looke on other things, and turne our eyes upon God at the same time.

Fifthly, this right Judgment it sets up, and makes a man willing to bee guided by the word of God, by the Ministers, or any servant of God ; a Child may lead him, the weakest Christian may lead him, if they bring Spirituall reason, as naturall men are led by reason, so these by the Word of God.

Sixtly, it makes a man able to practise that hee

I knows,

1.

knowes, whereas another man knowes much, practiseth little ; but this Judgement brings forth practice, this knowledge will lead us into action ; and so much for the first signe, whereby wee may know whether Christ hath wrought any sparke of grace in us, namely, if hee hath set up his Judgement in our hearts.

2.

Now for the second, this is such a Judgement as begets life : a Reed hath Life as well as an Oake : now if you would know if this life be right, or no, you shall know it by the heate, there is fire : so if we would know if this bee right, see it by the cōbate ;
if

if you would know if that
be right, try it by the
victory: well then, now
we have to speake of the
second signe, Consider
though you bee weake,
whether you are not as a
bruised reed, yea, or no,
which hath some life,
some strength in it. *Abrui-*
sed reed will hee not breake;
here wee will consider 3.
things.

2.

First, that there must bee
some strength and life in
the weakest.

1.

Secondly, this strength
is subject unto bruising,
Abruised reed &c.

2.

Thirdly, that Christ
wil heale all these bruises;
hee will not breake the
bruised reed, but will

3.

bring forth Judgement into victory.

For the first of these, there must be a reed which hath some life in it : Now life is such a faculty, whereby creatures move themselves in their owne places, so say Philosophers : other things that have not life, may moove themselves when they are out of their owne places : as a stone, when it is out of its owne place, moves downwards ; and fire here below, being out of its place, moves upwards ; but nothing can move it selfe in its place, but that which hath life in it. To apply this to our purpose, who-soever moves himselfe in the

the wayes of God, hath
life in him ; There bee
many things may move
ustowards God, as good
education , a powerfull
ministry, good company,
and the like ; as *Joash* and
Amaziah were good,
while their good friends
lived ; but all this doth not
argue life in us, because
they are but extrinsecall
causes ; as a hand may
make a stone move up-
wards, the stone hath not
life therefore ; but when a
man is so farre inlightned,
so fashioned and formed
by Jesus Christ, that he
judgeth aright of the
waies of God, and being
thus formed, he moves
himselſe to doe good,
I ; then

then hee is said to be alive, when Christ shall set up Iudgement in the heart of man, to see the evill of the wayes of sinne, and the good that is in the wayes of God, even then, hee moves towards those wayes naturally and willingly, such a one hath life in him: Let some consider this, that live in the Church under good Tutors, or Masters, or Parents, that are carryed on in a crowd of good company, they may do much, and yet have no life, because it may proceede from an outward cause, not from an inward perswasion of the heart, of the goodnesse of the wayes where.

wherein they walke.

There is a two-fold perswasion: one is, that the wayes of God are good; a bare perswasion onely, and yet this stirres not men up to walke in these wayes; but it lyes dead in the heart.

But there is another perswasion which is ingrafted in the heart, that moves a man to new obedience : 1.

James 21. 22. So wee shall finde there a double expression of light : one, which barely shewes men all evill and good : But there is another light with life, *Iohn 8. 12.* *Hee that followeth me, shal have the light of life* : It is an *Hebraisme*, hee shall have

I 4 - the

176 The SAINTS

the light of life; that is, the lively light : *Ephes. 5. 14.*
Awake from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

1. The first difference between them, is, the one reveales the wayes of God, but so, that the affections are not mooved, the hands are not set on worke.

2. But the other is, when that the wayes of God are so revealed, that wee see an amability, an excellency in them; and so, that wee lift up our hearts unto the waies of the *Lord*, as before we did unto vanity; (that is) wee desire earnestly to walke in them.

Con-

Consider how you lifted up your hearts to riches, pleasures, and other earthly vanities; if now you so lift up your hearts to walke in his wayes, then here is that inward perswasion; that lively light wrought in you; that life whereof we speake: This life is nothing else, but that which the Scripture calleth faith.

Now there is a dead faith spoken of; and how shall wee know it to bee dead? Thus, when it stirs us not up to good workes: And how shall wee know it is living? when it moves us willingly and readily to duties of obedience;

I s Christ

Christ dwels in the heart by faith : so saith *St. Paul*, *The life I now live , is by faith in the sonne of God*, *Gal. 2. 20.* (that is) there are two men that looke on Christ ; one lookes on him, beleeves all the promises, all threatnings, all his word , opens his heart, & lets Christ come in, and rule, and doe there what he list.

Another saith (if you aske him) that he beleeves all this ; but we shall know it by this ; because it doth not make him move forwards unto new obedience : now according to our life that is in us , so is our strength ; the lesse life, the lesse strength, *Revelations*

lations 3.8. The Church of Philadelphia is said to have a little strength: now if you would know whether you have true strength or no; you must distinguish between life and strength, to wit the least degree of strength will first enable a man to do all things in some measure; though not in that measure you should: it will enable you to love God, to-beleeve, to pray, &c. you can doe something of every thing. Phil. 4.:3. I can doe all things through Christ that strengtheneth mee.

Secondly, though it doe not reach the highest degree, yet it aimes at it, and hath

I.

Phil. 3. 14,
15.

hath a desire to come to it: After he had said, he had not yet attained to perfection, but aimed at it, made forward toward it; he adds, let as many as be perfect be thus minded: the least spark of fire wil endeavour to rise above the Aire, as well as the greatest, and where true strength is, it wil endeavour to be stronger.

3.

Thirdly, this is not an empty levelling at it, but it grows up to it; so doth not other common strength; there is a strength in iron to resist violent stroakes, and in a rocke to resist the force of the waves, but this is not a vitall strength, so in other men there may be

be strength of resolution,
but it is not a selfe-moving
strength, & therefore it cō-
tinues as it was, & growes
not; but in vitall strength,
there is a period to which
it growes, & never rests till
it comes up to it, as we see
in plants and other living
creatures, and men, they
grow up to their full
strength: so *Christiāns* have
their period which they
grow up to, & this period
is perfect holines, w^{ch} they
cannot attaine to in this
life: and therefore they are
stil growing so lōg as they
live. Now then see if you
have such a strength; & if
you can find that you have,
then there is life in you:
and that is the first
that

that wee propounded to shew, that there must bee some life, some strength.

2.

The second thing was, that this strength is subject to much bruising; *A bruised reed will bee not breake: A weake Christian,* though hee have not the strength of a man, yet hee hath the strength of a child; though not of a tree, yet of a plant; and such strength is subject to bruising, & the lesse strength, the more subject it is to bruising, as we see in plâts

Now bruising is of two sorts, and both arising from sinne.

1.

The first arise from sin as it is unpardoned: (that is) as you apprehend sin to be

be unpardoned, the more ready you are to be bruised.

The second sort ariseth from sinne as it is unmortified ; when a man sees still that sinne growes up, which he had thought he had cut down, he is ready to be bruised : The former sort is contrary to the grace of justification, the latter to that of sanctification; now *Christ* hath promised to heale these bruises, w^{ch} is the third thing to be considered: let those therefore that are thus weak, cōsider this promise here, that *Christ* will heale all these bruising, and so all other, the promise for this purpose that hee

2.

3.

hee will heale these bruifings, which arise from our doubting of justification, *Eſay 61. 1, 2, 3, 4. verſ.* that is the bruifing for which Chriſt came into the world, to preach glad tidings to the weake, and to binde up the broken hearted, to proclaime liberty to the captives. Therefore if a poore ſoule would goe to Chriſt, and ſay thus; Lord I am bound with a chaine of my ſins, and thou cameſt to ſet ſuch at liberty; Chriſt hee would doe it; for he was anoynted for that very purpoſe.

2.

And ſo for the bruifings that ariſe from ſinne unmortified, why Chriſt bath

hath promised not to leave thee to thy selfe, nor forsake thee ; but will destroy all the workes of the devill in thee ; therefore goe to *Christ*, and put him in minde of this promise, and say, *Lord*, I am one of them to whom this promise is made ; I am as a bruised reed, and as smoaking flaxe ; and thou hast promised, not to breake a bruised reed , nor quench the smoaking flaxe : put *Christ* thus in minde of his promise, and he will heare, and help, & heale thee. But now here are some cases of conscience to be resolved.

First, some will bee ready to say, that they have none of these bruises, that they

*Cases of
conscience.
Quest. 1.*

they are not thus weary, and heavy laden, because they cannot grieve for sin, so much as for other things.

I. *Answer.*

To which I answer, there may be some violent and sudden griefe, which may exceed griefe for sinne, as *Dauids* griefe for *Absalom*; but here is the difference; the griefe for sinne is constant and perpetuall, but the griefe for some losse or the like, is but for the present. Now a spring that runnes, and is never dry, yeelds more water than a land flood, which for the present seemes greater, but is soone dryed up: so griefe for sin, is like water that runnes
from

from a spring, which continues ; and griefe for other things, is like a land-flood which lasts not long.

Againe, they differ in regard of the tearmes of this sorrow : when a man hath lost a friend, hee looks on it as a totall & irreparable losse, and so grieves the more : and so in like manner, if we should look on the favour of God, as a thing irrevocably lost, his griefe for this would exceede the other. But because hee alwaies conceives some glimpse of Gods favour in the mid'st of this mourning, therefore this griefe seems the lesse, though in regard of

of continuance it be greater.

2 *Case.*

Oh ! but I have not attained to a just measure of bruisednesse.

Answer.

If there bee such a measure of bruisednesse in thee as brings thee home to Christ, thou hast attained a sufficient measure to bring thee to heaven. But this distinction must be remembered, that there is a double bringing of a man home to Christ.

I.

One is , when a man is brought so far towards Christ, as to be willing to take the crowne, and partake of the priviledges onely, but this is not sufficient ; but when thy sorrow shall so bring thee home

home to Christ, that thou art willing to take Christs yoke on thee, to subject thy selfe to Christ in all things, so much sorrow and bruisednesse as this is sufficient to bring thee home.

Oh, but though I am *3. Case.*
thus farre bruised, that I am willing to beare Christs yoke, and to doe that hee shall command me, yet I doe not finde that this promise is performed to me; God hides his face from mee, and I cannot finde him whom my soule loves; and that I cannot finde that my sins are pardoned: and so for bruises belonging to sanctification; I have striven
long

long against such a lust
and cannot see it mortifi-
ed any whit.

Answer.

To this I answer, that
Christ in with-holding
the Comfort, and suffer-
ing thee to bee more la-
ded, doth ever fulfill this
promise here made, *Math.*
11.28. Come unto me &c.

Objection 1.

But the Objection might
be made: Wee have come
unto thee, and yet finde
no rest: Christ therefore
addes: *Take my yoke upon*
you, and learne of mee, &c.

The yoke of Christ is the
government of Christ, the
taking of this yoke upon
us, is the subjecting our
selves to this government.

2. Things.

Now the govern-
ment of Christ consists
in

in two things.

First, it commands us to doe many things.

1.

Secondly, he will have us to suffer many things: and if wee take Christs yoke upon us, we must do both. Now, a man is willing to doe many things that *Christ* commands, but stoppes at some things; there is some thing, some duty which he wil not do, as prayer, giving of almes, or some other: And so also for suffering, hee is willing to endure some things for *Christ*, but there is something againe which he cannot endure; reproches, scoffes, and the like. If therefore God hold off comfort for any long season,

2.

son, let a man looke well to his spirit, and see if hee bee perfectly willing to take Christs yoke upon him, if hee were, the promise is certaine, and shall be made good, hee shall finde rest to his soule, and if hee doe not, there is some fault in himselfe. In the tenth of *Iudges*, ver. 10. to the end of the *Chapter*, there the people were burdened, and cryed unto the Lord, and yet found no rest: but God deferres comfort, and tells them, he would deliver them no more; then the people submitted themselves unto God, saying, *Doe with us what pleaseth thee, and put away their strange Gods,*
ver. 16

ver. 16. and served God.

Now when the children of *Israel* were brought to to this, to cast away the reliques of Idolatry, and to serve the Lord perfectly; then it is said: *The Lords spirit was grieved for the misery of Israel.* So if a man would have peace, and have sought it long, and cannot finde it, let him see whether there bee not some relique of corruption which God would have cast out of thy heart: and when it's done, and thou art willing to serve God perfectly, then thou shalt finde rest unto thy soule. And so much for the second signe of true grace wrought in a man,

K

to

to wit, if there be any life & strength in him, though it bee mingled with much weaknesse.

3.

The third we named, that where true grace was, there was heat. *Smoaking flaxe will he not quench:* where there is smoake, there is fire; and where fire is, there is heate, be it never so small; and this added to the former of life: Life is nothing else but a sublimary heate, and where there is life, there is heate, all life is joyned with heate: but not on the contrary, where there is heate, there is life; for cold things may bee warmed from without by the Sunne; but where there
is

is heate from an inward principle, there is life. The Spirit is compared to fire and heate; *Quench not the spirit: He shall baptize you with the holy Ghost and with fire;* or which is as fire. Therefore where this spirit is in a man, there the Holy Ghost hath bin. Now this heate is nothing else but a sollicitous and earnest desire to please God in all things, to get and encrease communion with *Christ*, and to be built up in grace. I say, it is, first, a sollicitous and earnest desire, a desire accompanied with carefulnesse how he may doe to please *God* in all things; whereas in other men

there is a luke-warmnesse, a remilnesse in all things, they care not whether they doe it or no : but this is an earnest carefull desire, and that in the second place to please God : an hypocrite may have strong desires; let him bee brought to have an apprehension of Gods wrath, and hell-fire, and he would have an earnest desire to be delivered from it : But all this is not to please God, but himselfe, and not God in all this : But our desire must bee to please God : *See how the affections were stirred*; and what fruits it wrought, they were moved by motives taken from God, and with desire

1 Cor. 7. 11.

desire tending to him, and so must we be.

Againe, this righteous fire hath in it this property, that it purifieth the heart from drosse and filth, and it puts it selfe forth in holy actions; makes a man ready to pray, to speake profitably, and the like; as fire makes men active, and fit for action.

Lastly, it is alway guided by the spirit of judgement, when you minde that most, which the Scripture presseth most; where the heart is upright, a man despiseth none of the wayes of God, not the meanest truth, but would know them all:

but that which the Scripture most of all urgeth, that hee most earnestly presseth after, and labours to bring his heart unto them; as the Scripture is most love, and the like, so hee taketh most paines with his heart about this: now therefore try by these properties, whether you have heate in you, or no.

Objection.

Oh! but I cannot finde this heate in me, I cannot finde these holy affections in my heart.

Answer.

I answer, consider if thou findest any affections that are holy in thee, though not many; yea, if thou findest none, consider if thou hast not this smoake; for sometimes a
man

man may finde the fire it
selfe, sometimes onely this
smoake, what is it? I an-
swer, when you find not
the affections so moving
as you see some others
doe, yet you finde in your
selfe a carefulnesse, and
watchfulnesse over your
wayes, that thou wilt'ft
not runne into sin, though
thou canst not doe what
good thou would'ft: why,
heere is the smoake, and
some fire, though but
small, *David* was not able
to doe as hee was wont to
doe, to pray as hee was
wont: and therefore hee
prayer God to restore him
his spirit, and the joyes he
was wont to have; but yet
hee was carefull over his

psal. 51. 12

wayes afterwards : And if thou findest but this smoake, this care over thy wayes, this resolution to commit no knowne sinne, though thou findest not the flame of this holy affection, yet be not discouraged, thou hast that which is of the same nature within thee : Smoake is of the same nature with flame, for flame is nothing but smoake set on fire ; and therefore take comfort, & continue constant still, till *God* inflames thee, and that is the 3 signe.

4.

Where there is true grace wrought, there is combate and strife in the working : and afterwards *till hee bring forth judgement into victory.* Before victory

victory there goes a combat: this then is implied, there must be a strife. *The Disciples strove amongst themselves who should bee the greatest in the kingdome of Heaven.* This is a property of all his servants: as *Christs* kingdome is not of this world; so are they not apt to contend for any thing in this world. But you may know if you bee *Christs* servants or no, if you contend for spirituall things. *Strive to enter in at the streight gate, for many shall seeke to enter in thereat, but shall not be able.* We see there are two dispositions of men, that some seeke, & are willing to goe to heaven, but take no

Match. 18. 1.

Luke 13. 24.

Math. 25.

2 Cor. 9. 24.

25.

paines for it; these seecke
saith *Christ* to enter, but
shall not be able to get in:
but others strive and con-
tend with all their power;
& such must be our strife,
if we will get into heaven.
The difference betweene
the wise Virgins and the
foolish lay in this, that the
wise were more diligent
than the other. Formall
professors may contend,
but it is but for a fit; they
are soone weary of this
contention, they leave off
rowing, & suffer the boate
to go downe the streame:
but wee must strive untill
we get the victory, and run
with *St. Paul* untill we get
the prize. And what made
him to doe so? why, hee
confide-

considered 2 things, first, he look't on the Crowne, an incorruptible Crowne. Secondly, he was loath to run in vaine, & lose all his labour: so the reason why we doe not contend, is because we doe not consider these 2 things, namely, the *prize & crowne* of reward, and that else we shall but lose our labour; and therefore we must strive: If we be remisse, it is an argumēt that wee have a name to live, but are dead.

And therefore consider it, there must bee a strife & a combate; and there will be that, by reason of that original corruption that is in us: We have continual worke with our owne hearts;

Rom. 7. 21.

hearts ; the flesh is ready to have the first hand in every businesse, if we doe not resist it ; wee shall exceedingly goe downe the winde, if we doe not strive, and that hard : For when there is an intused habit as grace is, and a corrupt nature contrary to it, nature is ready to take part with it, which was bred & borne with it. *When I would doe good, evil is still present with mee* : there is something lay at the fountaine-head, as it were, and stopt him when hee would doe any good. It is our case also ; in wel-doing wee see how backward we are to begin, and when we have begun, how ready we are

to leave off. But if it be a
businesse that concernes
our selves, we are ready to
doe, yea, to over-doe it:
How ready we are to idle
words, how backward we
are to profitable confe-
rence; how ready to spend
on our lusts, how back-
ward to true liberality; &
so I might instance in di-
vers others. And therefore
seeing wee have this flesh
about us, we had neede to
strive; it is that which a
Christian should make ac-
count of, to do that which
he hath not a minde to do,
and not to doe that which
he hath a minde to doe,
and so still to doe the con-
trary, and strive against
the lusts of the flesh, and so
to

to restraine his nature
from what he would doe.

1. *Obiect.*

But how should we doe
to contend thus?

Answer.

1 Tim. 6. 12.

To give you some di-
rections, *Fight the good
fight of faith*: The acting
of our faith, and setting it
on worke when any thing
comes to hinder us, will
helpe us to overcome in
this combate. Let a man
believe the promises and
threatnings of *God*, and he
shall be able to resist the
flesh: but let faith bee a-
sleepe, and it will quickly
prevaile against us: *Take
the shield of faith*: Now,
what a shield is for the de-
fence of the body, that
faith is for the defence of
the soule. Whe any temp-
tations

Ephe. 6. 16.

tations are suggested unto us; faith is it that repels them; never is a man overcome but through defect of faith, or when the habit lies hid asleepe in us.

Hebr. 11. When they set their faith on worke, what marvellous things did they? what made *Ieroboam* so weake? but onely want of faith: What was it that overcame *Eve*? but onely that shee did not beleevesteadfastly the word of *God*. On the contrary, what was it that strengthened *Daniel*, the *three children*, and infinite others? it was their faith. The Saints when they have the use of their faith, are very strong: but when they have not the use

use of their faith are very weake as other men ; as *Abraham*, how weake was hee , when he exposed his wives chastity for want of faith? and *David* when he dissembled , and *Peter* when he denyed his Master ; but when hee was strengthened through faith , how bold was hee before the Councell ? it was his faith that enabled him to fight the good fight, because hee kept the faith in the profession of it , and in the practise of it , and in teaching of it : and therefore if we would be strengthened to resist our spirituall enemies, we must labour to set our faith on worke, that is the
first

first meanes.

The second meanes, St. Peter sets downe: *Dearely beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstaine from fleshly lusts which war against the soule.* 1 Pet. 2. 11.

First, consider that you are but strangers and Pilgrimes: for if you take the pleasures in the world, you cannot sit by them, why? you are but strangers, therefore abstaine from them.

Againe, consider that these lusts they fight against the soule. No man in the world, that did consider that such a man now knocked at the doore, whom if hee did let in, would cut his throat, but that

that hee would use all
meanes to barre him out :
why this now is our case ;
they seeke our lives , nay
our soules ; they fight,
there is their force ; they
seeke to prevaile by maine
force if they can ; if they
cannot, then they seeke to
proceed by fraud and cun-
ning : they are ready to
perswade us, that they are
friends, and not ene-
mies, and that you may
goe to heaven though you
yeeld to them, and that
you may quickly over-
come them ; that if you sa-
tisfie them for the present,
they will be gone, and
trouble you no more, and
a thousand such like : but
take heed , fight against
them,

them, keepe them out, not onely for the present, for they renew the battell; as an enemy if hee bee too weake at one time in one place, hee increaseth his forces, takes more advantages, and renews his battaile againe: so doe these, they will set upon us againe and againe with a fresh force, and if they cannot prevaile one way, they will try another way, and if they cannot doe good by one, they will use all wayes.

And then consider the end of this fight, it is to kill and destroy, as we know the end of a fight is. Now these lusts they fight against your soule, and nothing

thing will satisfie them but your life. Every time they set upon you, it is a buffetting; every time you yeeld to them, it is a wounding, and if you doe not resist & strive against them, they will procure your utter perdition. And therefore I beseech you as strangers & pilgrims, abstaine from fleshly lusts which wr re against your soules.

Obiect. 1.

Yes, I could be content to strive, if there were any hope of doing any good: but I am affraid I shall be overcome, and therefore as good yeeld at the first, as at the last.

Answer.

I answer, there is great hope, yea, assurance of victory, wheresoever true
grace

grace is, though it may be held downe long, and suffer many oppositions : yet in the end he shall be sure of victory , *till hee bring forth judgemēt into victory.*

A fift signe to know if there be saving grace, yea, or no, if there be, it shall at last have the upper hand, but all through *Christ*; *Hee that hath begun that good worke, will persis it : For hee will do it, for he is faithfull,* and in him wee are rich : through him we shall bee more than conquerers, not through our selves ; we are apt to bee discouraged, when wee sit downe and consider what corruptions wee have arising from our natures, which wee thinke

we

Phd. 1.6.

1 Thei. 5. 24.

2 Cor. 8. 9.

wee shall never master. True, we cannot doe it in our owne strength, but *Christ* hath undertaken to doe it for us, hee shall subdue our iniquities.

There are 2. things in the kingdome of *grace*, which when we looke on, are apt to make us discouraged.

1. First, when a man lookes on his owne strength, and sees how little he can doe of himselfe.

2. Secondly, when hee lookes on the Kingdome of *grace* abroad, and sees how it goes downe the wind, and how the wicked prevaile, & the godly are weake, and goe to the wall: But *Christ* hee will afford us his strength against

gainst our lusts to subdue them, and for the enemies of the Gospell, he will trample them all under his feet ; it is his promile, *Hee will bring forth Iudgement into victory.* Now Christ doth this two waies : first, by watering the buds, the seeds of grace, and maketh them to spring up as Willowes by the water courses: *his branches shal spread, and his beauty shall be as the Olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon: they shal revive as the Corne, and grow as the Olive, &c.*

Esay 44. 4.

Hosca 14. 7.

Secondly, by removing all these impediments, which hinder the growth of grace any way. And therefore now let us not
be

2.

bee discouraged, but make use of these promises of *Sanctification*, which wee are lo apt to forget : And though we be as weak as a bruied Reede, or as the smoaking Flaxe, yet let us not faint, nor give over, but bee encouraged to strive, and contend without reasoning, seeing wee are sure the day shall bee ours; for so is his promise, *A bruised reed shall hee not breake, and smoaking flaxe shall he not quench, till hee bring forth Iudgement into victory.*

FINIS.

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